REV. JOHN G. HENRY,
CINCINNATI, OHIO.

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John E. Henry.

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SEVENTH SERIES.

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OF

REV. C. H. SPURGEON

Of London

REV. JOHN G. HENRY,
CINCINNATI, OHIO.

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SERMON I.

A NEW-YEAR'S BENEDICTION.

[This discourse was preached in Exeter Hall, Sabbath morning, Jan. 1, 1860. The subject and treatment both are admirably fitted for the beginning of the year, though scarcely less for any other time. The *jewels* and their *dark setting* find their fulfilment in every godly life.]

"But the God of all grace who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you.—1 Peter, v. 10.

I have this morning taken this text as a new-year's blessing. You are aware that a venerable minister of the Church of England always supplies me with the motto for the new year. Ripening as he is for eternal glory, he prays much before he selects the text, and I know that it is his prayer for you all to-day. He constantly favors me with this motto, and I always think it my duty to preach from it, and then desire my people to remember it through the year as a staff of support in their time of trouble, as some sweet morsel, a wafer made with honey, a portion of angel's food, which they may roll under their tongue, and carry in their memory till the year ends, and then begin with another sweet text. What larger benediction could my aged friend have chosen, standing as he is to-day in his pulpit, and lifting up holy hands to preach to the people in a quiet village church—what larger blessing could he implore for the thousands of Israel than that which in his name I pronounce upon

you this day—"But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you."

In discoursing upon this text, I shall have to remark:—first *what the apostle asks of heaven;* and then, secondly, *why he expects to receive it.* The reason of his expecting to be answered is contained in the title by which he addresses the Lord his God —"The GOD OF ALL GRACE who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus."

I. WHAT THE APOSTLE ASKS FOR ALL TO WHOM THIS EPISTLE WAS WRITTEN. He asks for them four sparkling jewels set in a black foil. The four jewels are these:—*Perfection, Establishment, Strengthening, Settling.* The jet-black setting is this:—"After that ye have suffered awhile." Worldly compliments are of little worth; for as Chesterfield observes, "They cost nothing but ink and paper." I must confess, I think even that little expense is often thrown away. Worldly compliments generally omit all idea of sorrow. "A merry Christmas! A happy new year!" There is no supposition of anything like suffering. But Christian benedictions look at the truth of matters. We know that men must suffer; we believe that men are born to sorrow as the spark flieth upwards; and therefore in our benediction we include the sorrow. Nay, more than that, we believe that the sorrow shall assist in working out the blessing which we invoke upon your heads. We, in the language of Peter, say, "*After that* ye have suffered awhile, may the God of all grace make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you." Understand, then, as I take each of these four jewels, that you are to look upon them, and consider that they are only desired for you "*after that* ye have suffered awhile." We must not discard the sufferings. We must take them from the same hand from which we receive the mercy; and the blessing bears date "after that ye have suffered awhile."

1 The first sparkling jewel in this ring is *perfection.* The apostle prays that God would make us *perfect.* Indeed, though this be a large prayer, and the jewel is a diamond of the first water, and of the finest size, yet is it absolutely necessary to a Christian that he should ultimately arrive at perfection. Have

ye never on your bed dreamed a dream, when your thoughts roamed at large and the bit was taken from your imagination, when stretching all your wings, your soul floated through the Infinite, grouping strange and marvellous things together, so that the dream rolled on in something like supernatural splendor? But on a sudden you were awakened, and you have regretted hours afterwards that the dream was never concluded. And what is a Christian, if he do not arrive at perfection, but an unfinished dream? A majestic dream it is true, full of things that earth had never known if it had not been that they were revealed to flesh and blood by the Spirit. But suppose the voice of sin should startle us ere that dream be concluded, and if, as when one awaketh, we should despise the image which began to be formed in our minds, what were we then? Everlasting regrets, a multiplication of eternal torment must be the result of our having begun to be Christians, if we do not arrive at perfection. If there could be such a thing as a man in whom sanctification began, but in whom God the Spirit ceased to work, if there could be a being so unhappy as to be called by grace and to be deserted before he was perfected, there would not be among the damned in hell a more unhappy wretch. It were no blessing for God to begin to bless if he did not perfect. It were the grandest curse which Omnipotent hatred itself could pronounce, to give a man grace at all, if that grace did not carry him to the end, and land him safely in heaven. I must confess that I would rather endure the pangs of that dread archangel, Satan, throughout eternity, than have to suffer as one whom God once loved, but whom he cast away. But such a thing shall never be. Whom once he hath chosen he doth not reject. We know that where he hath begun a good work he will carry it on, and he will complete it until the day of Christ.

Grand is the prayer, then, when the apostle asks that we may be perfected. What were a Christian if he were not perfected? Have you never seen a canvas upon which the hand of the painter has sketched with daring pencil some marvellous scene of grandeur? You see where the living color has been laid on with an almost superhuman skill. But the artist was suddenly struck dead, and the hand that worked miracles of art was pal-

sied. Is it not a source of regret to the world that ever the painting was commenced, since it was never finished? Have you never seen the human face divine starting out from the chiselled marble? You have seen the exquisite skill of the sculptor, and you have said within yourself, "What a marvellous thing will this be? what a matchless specimen of human skill?" But, alas! it was left unfinished. And do you imagine that God will begin to sculpture out a perfect being and not complete it? Do you think that the hand of divine wisdom will sketch the Christian and not fill up the details? Hath God taken us as unhewn stones out of the quarry, and hath he begun to work upon us, and show his divine art, his marvellous wisdom and grace, and will he afterwards cast us away? Shall God fail? Shall he leave his works imperfect? Point, if you can, my hearers, to a world which God has cast away unfinished. Is there one speck in his creation where God hath begun to build but was not able to complete? Hath he made a single angel deficient? Is there one creature over which it cannot be said, "This is very good?" And shall it be said over the creature twice made—the chosen of God, the blood-bought—shall it be said, "The Spirit began to work in this man's heart, but the man was mightier than the Spirit, and sin conquered grace? Oh, my dear brethren, the prayer shall be fulfilled. After that ye have suffered awhile, God shall make you perfect if he has begun the good work in you.

But, beloved, it must be after that ye have suffered awhile. Ye cannot be perfected except by the fire. There is no way of ridding you of your dross and your tin but by the flames of the furnace of affliction. Your folly is so bound up in your hearts, ye children of God, that nothing but the rod can bring it out of you. It is through the blueness of your wounds that your heart is made better. Ye must pass through tribulation, that through the Spirit it may act as a refining fire to you: that pure, holy, purged, and washed, ye may stand before the face of your God, rid of every imperfection, and delivered from every corruption within.

2. Let us now proceed to the second blessing of the benediction—*establishment*. It is not enough even if the Christian had

received in himself a proportional perfection, if he were not established. You have seen the arch of heaven as it spans the plain: glorious are its colors, and rare its hues. Though we have seen it many and many a time, it never ceases to be "A thing of beauty and a joy forever." But, alas for the rainbow, it is not established. It passes away, and lo it is not. The fair colors give way to the fleecy clouds, and the sky is no longer brilliant with the tints of heaven. It is not established. How can it be? A thing that is made of transitory sunbeams and passing rain-drops, how can it abide? And mark, the more beautiful the vision, the more sorrowful the reflection when that vision vanishes, and there is nothing left but darkness. It is, then, a very necessary wish for the Christian, that he should be established. Of all God's known conceptions, next to his incarnate Son, I do not hesitate to pronounce a Christian man the noblest conception of God. But if this conception is to be but as the rainbow painted on the cloud, and is to pass away forever, woe worth the day that ever our eyes were tantalized with a sublime conception that is so soon to melt away.

What is a Christian man better than the flower of the field, which is here to-day, and which withers when the sun is risen with fervent heat, unless God establish him—what is the difference between the heir of heaven, the blood-bought child of God, and the grass of the field? Oh, may God fulfil to you this rich benediction, that you may not be as the smoke out of a chimney, which is blown away by the wind: that your goodness may not be as the morning cloud, and as the early dew which passeth away; but may ye be established, may every good thing that you have be an abiding thing. May your character be not a writing upon the sand, but an inscription upon the rock. May your faith be no "baseless fabric of a vision," but may it be builded of stone that shall endure that awful fire which shall consume the wood, hay, and stubble of the hypocrite. May ye be rooted and grounded in love. May your convictions be deep. May your love be real. May your desires be earnest. May your whole life be so settled, fixed, and established, that all the blasts of hell and all the storms of earth shall never be able to remove you. You know we talk about some Christian men as be-

ing old-established Christians. I do fear there are a great many that are old, who are not established. It is one thing to have the hair whitened with years, but I fear it is another thing for us to obtain wisdom. There be some who grow no wiser by all their experience. Though their fingers be well rapped by experience, yet have they not learned in that school. I know there are many aged Christians who can say of themselves, and say it sorrowfully too, they wish they had their opportunities over again, that they might learn more, and might be more established. We have heard them sing—

> 'I find myself a learner yet,
> Unskilful, weak, and apt to slide."

The benediction however of the apostle is one which I pray may be fulfilled in us, whether we be young or old, but especially in those of you who have long known your Lord and Saviour. You ought not now to be the subject of those doubts which vex the babe in grace. Those first principles should not always be laid again by you: but you should be going forward to something higher. You are getting near to heaven; oh, how is it that you have not got to the land Beulah yet? to that land which floweth with milk and honey? Surely your wavering ill beseemeth those gray hairs. Methought they had been whitened with the sunlight of heaven. How is it that some of the sunlight does not gleam from your eyes? We who are young look up to you old-established Christians; and if we see you doubting, and hear you speaking with a trembling lip, then we are exceedingly cast down. We pray for our sakes as well as for yours, that this blessing may be fulfilled in you, that you may be established; that you may no longer be exercised with doubt; that you may know your interest in Christ; that you may feel you are secure in him; that, resting upon the rock of ages, you may know that you cannot perish while your feet are fixed there. We do pray, in fact, for all, of whatever age, that our hope may be fixed upon nothing less than Jesu's blood and righteousness, and that it may be so firmly fixed that it may never shake; but that we may be as Mount Zion, which can never be removed, and which abideth forever.

Thus have I remarked upon the second blessing of this benediction. But mark, we cannot have it until after we have suffered a while. We cannot be established except by suffering. It is of no use our hoping that we shall be well-rooted if no March winds have passed over us. The young oak cannot be expected to strike its roots so deep as the old one. Those old gnarlings on the roots, and those strange twistings of the branches, all tell of many storms that have swept over the aged tree. But they are also indicators of the depths into which the roots have dived; and they tell the woodman that he might as soon expect to rend up a mountain as to tear up that oak by the roots. We must suffer a while, then shall we be established.

3 Now for the third blessing, which is *strengthening*. Ah, brethren, this is a very necessary blessing too for all Christians. There be some whose characters seem to be fixed and established. But still they lack force and vigor. Shall I give you a picture of a Christian without strength? There he is. He has espoused the cause of King Jesus. He hath put on his armor; he hath enlisted in the heavenly host. Do you observe him? He is perfectly panoplied from head to foot, and he carries with him the shield of faith. Do you notice, too, how firmly he is established? He keeps his ground, and he will not be removed. When he uses his sword it falls with feeble force. His shield, though he grasps it as firmly as his weakness will allow him, trembles in his grasp. There he stands; he will not move, but still how tottering is his position. His knees knock together with affright when he heareth the sound and the noise of war and tumult. What doth this man need? His will is right, his intention is right, and his heart is fully set upon good things. Why, he needeth strength. The poor man is weak and child-like. Either because he has been fed on unsavory and unsubstantial meat, or because of some sin which has straitened him, he has not that force and strength which ought to dwell in the Christian man. But once let the prayer of Peter be fulfilled to him, and how strong the Christian becomes.

There is not in all the world a creature so strong as a Christian when God is with him. Talk of Behemoth! he is but as a little thing. His might is weakness when matched with the believer.

Talk of Leviathan, that maketh the deep to be hoary! *he* is not the chief of the ways of God. The true believer is mightier far than even he. Have you never seen the Christian when God is with him? He smelleth the battle afar off, and he cries in the midst of the tumult, "Aha! aha! aha!" He laugheth at all the hosts of his enemies. Or if you compare him to the Leviathan—if he be cast into a sea of trouble, he lashes about him and makes the deep hoary with benedictions. He is not overwhelmed by the depths, nor is he afraid of the rocks; he has the protection of God about him, and the floods cannot drown him; nay, they become an element of delight to him, while by the grace of God he rejoiceth in the midst of the billows. If you want a proof of the strength of a Christian, you have only to turn to history, and you can see there how believers have quenched the violence of fire, have shut the mouths of lions, have laughed tyrants to scorn, and have put to flight the armies of aliens, by the all-mastering power of faith in God. I pray God, my brethren, that he may strengthen you this year.

The Christians of this age are very feeble. It is a remarkable thing that the great mass of children now-a-days are born feeble. You ask me for the evidence of it. I can supply it very readily. You are aware that in the Church of England Liturgy it is ordered and ordained that all children should be immersed in baptism, except those that are certified to be of a weakly state. Now it were uncharitable to imagine that persons would be guilty of falsehood when they come up to what they think to be a sacred ordinance; and, therefore, as nearly all children are now sprinkled, and not immersed, I suppose they are born feeble. Whether that accounts for the fact that all Christians are so feeble I will not undertake to say, but certain it is that we have not many gigantic Christians now-a-days. Here and there we hear of one who seems to work all but miracles in these modern times, and we are astonished. Oh that ye had faith like these men! I do not think there is much more piety in England now than there used to be in the days of the Puritans. I believe there are far more pious men; but while the quantity has been multiplied, I fear the quality has been depreciated. In those days the stream of grace ran very deep indeed. Some of those old Puritans,

when we read of their devotion, and of the hours they spent in prayer, seem to have as much grace as any hundred of us. But now-a-days, the banks are broken down, and great meadows have been flooded therewith. So far so good. But while the surface has been enlarged, I fear the depth has been greatly diminished. And this may account for the fact, that while our piety has become shallow, our strength has become weak. Oh, may God strengthen you this year! But remember, if he does do so, you will then have to suffer. "After that ye have suffered awhile," may he strengthen you.

4. And now I come to the last blessing of the four—which is "*Settling.*" I will not say that this last blessing is greater than the other three, but it is a stepping-stone to each; and strange to say, it is often the result of a gradual attainment of the three preceding ones. "Settle you!" Oh, how many there are that are never settled! The tree which should be transplanted every week would soon die. Nay, it it were moved, no matter how skilfully, once every year, no gardener would expect fruit from it. How many Christians there be that are transplanting themselves constantly, even as to their doctrinal sentiments. There be some who generally believe according to the last speaker; and there be others who do not know what they do believe, but they believe almost anything that is told them. The spirit of Christian charity, so much cultivated in these days, and which we all love so much, has, I fear, assisted in bringing into the world a species of latitudinarianism; or, in other words, men have come to believe that it does not matter what they do believe; that although one minister says *it is so*, and the other says *it is not so*, yet we are both right; though we contradict each other flatly, yet we are both correct. I know not where men have had their judgments manufactured, but to my mind it always seems impossible to believe a contradiction.

I can never understand how contrary sentiments can both of them be in accordance with the Word of God, which is the standard of truth. But yet there be some who are like the weathercock upon the church steeple, they will turn just as the wind blows. As good Mr. Whitfield said, "You might as well mea-

sure the moon for a suit of clothes as tell their doctrinal sentiments," for they are always shifting and changing. Now, I pray that this may be taken away from any of you, if this be your weakness, and that you may be *settled.* Far from us be bigotry removed; yet would I have the Christian know what he believes to be true and then stand to it. Take your time in weighing the controversy, but when you have once decided, be not easily moved. Let God be true, though every man be a liar; and stand to it, that what is according to God's Word one day, cannot be contrary to it another day; that what was true in Luther's day and Calvin's day *must* be true now; that falsehoods may shift, for they have a Protean shape; but the truth is one and indivisible, and evermore the same. Let others think as they please. Allow the greatest latitude to others, but to yourself allow none. Stand firm and steadfast by that which ye have been taught, and ever seek the spirit of the apostle Paul, "If any man preach any other gospel than that which we have received, let him be accursed." If, however, I wished you to be firm in your doctrines, my prayer would be that you may be especially settled in your *faith.* You believe in Jesus Christ the Son of God, and you rest in him. But sometimes your faith wavers; then you lose your joy and comfort. I pray that your faith may become so settled that it may never be a matter of question with you whether Christ is yours or not, but that you may say confidently, "I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him."

Then I pray that you may be settled in your *aims and designs.* There are many Christian people who get a good idea into their heads, but they never carry it out, because they ask some friend what he thinks of it. "Not much," says he. Of course he does not. Who ever did think much of anybody else's idea? And at once the person who conceived it gives it up, and the work is never accomplished. How many a man in his ministry has begun to preach the gospel, when some member of the church—some deacon possibly—has pulled him by one ear, and he has gone a little that way. By-and-bye some other brother has thought fit to pull him in the other direction. The man has lost

his manliness. He has never been settled as to what he ought to do; and now he becomes a mere lacquey, waiting upon everybody's opinion, willing to adopt whatever anybody else conceives to be right. Now, I pray you, be settled in your aims. See what niche it is that God would have you occupy. Stand in it, and don't be got out of it by all the laughter that comes upon you. If you believe God has called you to a work, *do it*. If men will help you, thank them. If they will not, tell them to stand out of your road or be run over. Let nothing daunt you He who will serve his God must expect sometimes to serve him alone. Not always shall we fight in the ranks. There are times when the Lord's David must fight Goliath singly, and must take with him three stones out of the brook amid the laughter of his brethren, yet still in his weapons is he confident of victory through faith in God. Be not moved from the work to which God has put you. Be not weary in well-doing, for in due season ye shall reap if ye faint not. Be ye settled. Oh, may God fulfil this rich blessing to you.

But you will not be settled unless you *suffer*. You will become settled in your faith and settled in your aims by suffering. Men are soft molluscous animals in these days. We have not the tough men that know they are right and stand to it. Even when a man is wrong we admire his conscientiousness, if he stands up believing that he is right and dares to face the frowns of the world. But when a man is right, the worst thing he can have is inconstancy, vacillation, the fear of men. Hurl it from thee, O knight of the holy cross, and be firm if thou wouldst be victorious. Faint heart never stormed a city yet, and thou wilt never win nor be crowned with honor, if thy heart be not steeled against every assault, and if thou be not settled in thy intention to honor thy Master and to win the crown.

II. THE REASONS WHY THE APOSTLE PETER EXPECTED THAT HIS PRAYER WOULD BE HEARD.

1. He asked that they might be made perfect, established, strengthened, settled. Did not Unbelief whisper in Peter's ear, "Peter, thou askest too much. Thou wast always headstrong. Thou didst say, 'Bid me come upon the water.' Surely, this is

another instance of thy presumption. If thou hadst said, 'Lord, make them holy,' had it not been a sufficient prayer? Hast thou not asked too much?" "No," saith Peter; and he replies to Unbelief, "I am sure I shall receive what I have asked for; for *I am in the first place asking it of the God of all grace*—the God of all grace." Not the God of the little graces we have received already, but the God of the great boundless grace which is stored up for us in the promise, but which as yet we have not received in our experience. "The God of *all* grace;" of quickening grace, of convincing grace, of pardoning grace, of believing grace—the God of comforting, supporting, sustaining grace. Surely, when we come to him we cannot come for too much. If he be the God, not of one grace, or of two graces, but of *all* graces; if in him there is stored up an infinite, boundless, limitless supply, how can we ask too much, even though we ask that we may be perfect?

Believer, when you are on your knees, remember you are going to a king. Let your petitions be large. Imitate the example of Alexander's courtier, who, when he was told he might have whatever he chose to ask as a reward for his valor, asked a sum of money so large that Alexander's treasurer refused to pay it until he had first seen the monarch. When he saw the monarch, he smiled, and said, "It is true it is much for him to ask, but it is not much for Alexander to give. I admire him for his faith in me; let him have all he asks for." And dare I ask that I may be perfect, that my angry temper may be taken away, my stubbornness removed, my imperfections covered? May I ask that I may be like Adam in the garden—nay more, as pure and perfect as God himself? May I ask, that one day I may tread the golden streets, and "With my Saviour's garments on, holy as the holy one," stand in the mid blaze of God's glory, and cry, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" Yes, I may ask it; and I shall have it, for he is the God of all grace.

2. Look again at the text, and you see another reason why Peter expected that his prayer would be heard:—"The God of all grace *who hath called us*." Unbelief might have said to Peter, "Peter, it is true that God is the God of all grace, but he

is as a fountain shut up, as waters sealed." "Ah," saith Peter, "get thee hence, Satan; thou savorest not the things that be of God. It is not a sealed fountain of all grace, for it has begun to flow"—"The God of all grace hath *called us*." Calling is the first drop of mercy that trickleth into the thirsty lip of the dying man. Calling is the first golden link of the endless chain of eternal mercies. Not the first in order of time with God, but the first in order of time with us. The first thing we know of Christ in his mercy, is that he cries, "Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden," and that by his sweet Spirit he addresses us, so that we obey the call and come to him. Now, mark, if God has called me, I may ask him to stablish and keep me; I may ask that as year rolls after year my piety may not die out; I may pray that the bush may burn, but not be consumed; that the barrel of meal may not waste, and the cruse of oil may not fail. Dare I ask that to life's latest hour I may be faithful to God, because God is faithful to me? Yes, I may ask it, and I shall have it too · because the God that calls, will give the rest. "For whom he did foreknow, them he did predestinate, and whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Think of thy calling, Christian, and take courage, "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." If he has called thee he will never repent of what he has done, nor cease to bless or cease to save.

3. But I think there is a stronger reason coming yet:—"The God of all grace, who hath called us *unto his eternal glory*." Hath God called thee, my hearer? Dost thou know to what he has called thee? He called thee first into the house of conviction, where he made thee feel thy sin. Again he called thee to Calvary's summit, where thou didst see thy sin atoned for and thy pardon sealed with precious blood. And now he calls thee again. And whither away? I hear a voice to-day—unbelief tells me that there is a voice calling me to Jordan's waves. Oh, unbelief! it is true that through the stormy billows of that sea my soul must pass. But the voice comes not from the depths of the grave, it comes from the eternal glory. There where Jehovah sits resplendent on his throne, surrounded by cherubim

and seraphim, from that brightness into which angels dare not gaze, I hear a voice—"Come unto me, thou blood-washed sinner, come unto my eternal glory." O heavens, is not this a wondrous call?—to be called to glory—called to the shining streets and pearly gates—called to the harps and to the songs of eternal happiness—and better still, called to Jesu's bosom—called to his Father's face—called, not to eternal glory, but to His eternal glory—called to that very glory and honor with which God invests himself forever? And now, beloved, is any prayer too great after this? Has God called me to heaven, and is there anything on earth he will deny me? If he has called me to dwell in heaven, is not perfection necessary for me? May I not therefore ask for it? If he has called me to glory, is it not necessary that I should be strengthened to fight my way thither? May I not ask for strengthening? Nay, if there be a mercy upon earth too great for me to think of, too large for me to conceive, too heavy for my language to carry it before the throne in prayer, he will do for me exceeding abundantly above what I can ask, or even think. I know he will, because he has called me to his eternal glory.

4. The last reason why the apostle expected that his benediction would be fulfilled was this: "Who hath called us to his eternal glory *by Christ Jesus*." It is a singular fact that no promise is ever so sweet to the believer as those in which the name of Christ is mentioned. If I have to preach a comforting sermon to desponding Christians, I would never select a text which did not enable me to lead the desponding one to the cross. Does it not seem too much to you, brethren and sisters, this morning, that the God of all grace should be your God? Does it not surpass your faith that he should actually have called *you?* Do you not sometimes doubt as to whether you were called at all? And when you think of eternal glory, does not the question arise, "Shall I ever enjoy it? Shall I ever see the face of God with acceptance?" Oh, beloved, when ye hear of *Christ*, when you know that this grace comes through Christ, and the calling through Christ, and the glory through Christ, then you say, "Lord, I can believe it now, if it is through Christ." It is not a hard thing to believe that Christ's blood was sufficient to purchase

every blessing for me. If I go to God's treasury without Christ, I am afraid to ask for anything, but when Christ is with me, I can then ask for everything. For sure I think *he* deserves it though *I* do not. If I can claim his merits, then I am not afraid to plead. Is perfection too great a boon for God to give to Christ? Oh, no. Is the keeping, the stability, the preservation of the blood-bought ones too great a reward for the terrible agonies and sufferings of the Saviour? I trow not. Then we may with confidence plead, because everything comes through Christ.

I would, in concluding, make this remark. I wish, my brothers and sisters, that during this year you may live nearer to Christ than you have ever done before. Depend upon it, it is when we think much of Christ, that we think little of ourselves, little of our troubles, and little of the doubts and fears that surround us. Begin from this day, and may God help you. Never let a single day pass over your head without a visit to the garden of Gethsemane, and the cross on Calvary. And as for some of you who are not saved, and know not the Redeemer, I would to God that this very day you would come to Christ. I dare say you think coming to Christ is some terrible thing; that you need to be prepared before you come; that he is hard and harsh with you. When men have to go to a lawyer they need to tremble; when they have to go to the doctor they may fear; though both those persons, however unwelcome, may be often necessary But when you come to Christ, you may come boldly. There is no fee required, there is no preparation necessary. You may come just as you are. It was a brave saying of Martin Luther's, when he said, "I would run into Christ's arms even if he had a drawn sword in his hand." Now, he has not a drawn sword, but he has his wounds in his hands. Run into his arms, poor sinner. "Oh," you say, "May I come?" How can you ask the question? you are *commanded* to come. The great command of the gospel is, "Believe on the Lord Jesus." Those who disobey this command disobey God. It is as much a command of God that man should believe on Christ, as that we should love our neighbor. Now, what is a command I have

certainly a right to obey. There can be no question, you see. A sinner has liberty to believe in Christ because he is told to do so. God would not have told him to do a thing which he must not do.

You are allowed to believe. "Oh," saith one, "that is all I want to know. I do believe that Christ is able to save to the uttermost. *May I* rest my soul on him, and say, sink or swim, most blessed Jesus, thou art my Lord?" *May* do it! man? Why, you are commanded to do it. Oh, that you may be enabled to do it. Remember, this is not a thing which you will do at a risk. The risk is in not doing it. Cast yourself on Christ, sinner. Throw away every other dependence, and rest alone on him. "No," says one, "I am not prepared." Prepared! sir? Then you do not understand me. There is no preparation needed; it is, just as you are. "Oh, I do not feel my need enough." I know you do not. What has that to do with it? You are commanded to cast yourself on Christ. Be you never so black or never so bad, trust to him. He that believeth on Christ shall be saved, be his sins never so many; he that believeth not must be damned, be his sins never so few. The great command of the gospel is, "Believe." "Oh," but saith one, "am I to say I know that Christ died for me?" Ah, I did not say that, you shall learn that by-and-bye. You have nothing to do with that question now, your business is to believe on Christ and trust him; to cast yourself into his hands. And may God, the Spirit, now sweetly compel you to do it. Now, sinner, hands off your own righteousness. Drop all idea of becoming better through your own strength. Cast yourself on the promise. Say—

> "Just as I am without one plea,
> But that thy blood was shed for me,
> And that thou bid'st me come to thee,
> Oh, Lamb of God! I come, I come."

Now, have I made myself understood? If there were a number of persons here in debt, and I were to say, "If you will simply trust to me, your debts shall be paid, and no creditor shall ever molest you," you would understand me directly. How

is it you cannot comprehend that trusting in Christ will remove all your debts, take away all your sins, and you shall be saved eternally. Oh, Spirit of the living God, open the understanding to receive, and the heart to obey, and may many a soul here present cast itself on Christ. On all such, as on all believers, do I again pronounce the benediction, with which I shall dismiss you. "May the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you!" AMEN.

SERMON II.

THE KING'S HIGHWAY OPENED.

[The following Sermon was preached at Exeter Hall, Jan. 8, 1860, and was designed to remove the stumbling-stones from the way to the City of Refuge, so that fearful seekers of salvation might not be hindered in coming to Christ. Of this discourse Mr. Spurgeon says: "It has brought very many to comfort of soul and decision for Christ. Both in the hearing and reading of it, men who were timorous and ignorant have found grace to walk in the Lord's ways. Unto the gracious Spirit be glory."]

"And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."—Acts, xvi. 31.

You will remember that when the children of Israel were settled in Canaan, God ordained that they should set apart certain cities to be called the Cities of Refuge, that to these the manslayer might flee for security. If he killed another unawares, and had no malice aforethought, he might flee at once to the City of Refuge; and if he could enter its gates before the avenger of blood should overtake him, he would be secure. We are told by the rabbis that once in the year, or oftener, the magistrates of the district were accustomed to survey the high roads which led to these cities: they carefully gathered up all the stones, and took the greatest possible precautions that there should be no stumbling-blocks in the way which might cause the poor fugitive to fall, or might by any means impede him in his hasty course. We hear, moreover, and we believe the tradition to be grounded

in fact, that all along the road there were hand-posts with the word "Refuge" written very legibly upon them, so that when the fugitive came to a cross-road, he might not need to question for a single moment which was the way of escape; but seeing the well-known word "Refuge," he kept on his breathless and headlong course until he had entered the suburb of the City of Refuge, and he was then at once completely safe.

Now, my brothers and sisters, God has prepared for the sons of men a City of Refuge, and the way to it is by FAITH IN CHRIST JESUS. It is needful, however, that very often the ministers of Christ should survey this road, lest there should be any stumbling-blocks in the path of the poor sinner. I propose this morning to go along it, and, by God's grace, to remove any impediment which Satan may have laid upon the path; and may God so help me, that this survey may be of spiritual benefit to all your souls, that any of you who have been made to stumble in the path of faith may now pluck up courage, and run joyfully forward, hoping yet to escape from the fierce avenger of your sins.

Well may the minister be careful to keep the road of faith clear for the seeking sinner; for surely the sinner hath a heavy heart to carry, and we ought to make the road as clear and as smooth as we can. We should make straight paths for the feet of these poor benighted souls. It should be our endeavor to cast loads of promises into every slough that runs across the path, that so it may be a king's highway, and may be safe and easy for travelling for those weary feet that have to carry such a heavy heart. Besides, we must remember that the sinner will make stumbling-blocks enough for himself, even with our greatest and most scrupulous care to remove any others that may naturally lie in his way. For this is one of the sad follies of the poor desponding soul—that it spoils its own road. You have sometimes seen, perhaps, the newly-invented engine in the streets, the locomotive that lays down its own pathway and then picks it up again. Now, the sinner is the very reverse of that; he spoils his own road before himself, and then carries behind him all the mire and dirt of his own mishaps. Poor soul! he flings stones before himself, cuts out valleys, and casts up mountains

in his own pathway. Well may the ministers, then, be careful to keep this road clear. And, let me add, there is another weighty reason. Behind him comes the furious avenger of blood. Oh, how swift is he! There is Moses armed with all the wrath of God, and Death following hard after him—a mounted rider upon his pale horse; and after Death there cometh Hell with all the powers and legions of Satan, all athirst for blood, and swift to slay. Make straight the road, oh ministers of Christ!—level the mountains—fill up the valleys; for this is a desperate flight, this flight of the sinner from his ferocious enemies towards the one City of Refuge--the atonement of Jesus Christ.

I have thus given the reasons why I am compelled in spirit to make this survey this morning. Come, O Spirit, the Comforter, and help us now, that every stone may be cast out of the high road to heaven.

The road to heaven, my brethren, is BY FAITH IN CHRIST JESUS. It is not by well doing that you can be saved, though it is by ill-doing that you will be damned if you put not trust in Christ. Nothing that you can do can save you. Albeit that after you are saved it will be your delightful privilege to walk in the ways of God and to keep his commandments, yet all your own attempts to keep the commandments previous to faith will but sink you deeper into the mire, and will by no means contribute to your salvation. The one road to heaven is BY FAITH IN CHRIST. Or, to make it plainer still, as the countryman said, there are but two steps to heaven—out of self into Christ; and then, out of Christ into heaven. Faith is simply explained as *trusting in Christ.* I find that Christ commands me to believe in him, or to trust him. I feel that there is no reason in myself why I should be allowed to trust him. But he *commands* me to do so. Therefore, altogether apart from my character or from any preparation that I feel in myself, I obey the command, and sink or swim—I trust Christ. Now, that is faith; when, with the eye shut as to all evidence of hope in ourselves, we take a leap in the dark, right into the arms of an Omnipotent Redeemer.

Faith is sometimes spoken of in Scripture as being a leaning upon Christ--a casting of one's self upon him; or, as the old Puritans used to put it (using a somewhat hard word), it is re-

cumbency on Christ—the leaning of the whole weight upon his cross; ceasing to stand by the strength of one's own power, and resting wholly upon the rock of ages. The leaving of the soul in the hands of Jesus is the very essence of faith. Faith is receiving Christ into our emptiness. There is Christ like the conduit in the market-place As the water flows from the pipes, so does grace continually flow from him. By faith I bring my empty pitcher and hold it where the water flows, and receive of its fulness, grace for grace. It is not the beauty of my pitcher, it is not even its cleanness that quenches my thirst: it is simply holding that pitcher to the place where water flows. Even so I am but the vessel, and my faith is the hand which presents the empty vessel to the flowing stream. It is the grace, and not the qualification of the receiver, which saves the soul. And though I hold that pitcher with a trembling hand, and much of that which I seek may be lost through my weakness, yet if the soul be but held to the fountain, and so much as a single drop trickle into it, my soul is saved. Faith is receiving Christ with the understanding, and with the will, submitting everything to him, taking him to be my all in all, and agreeing to be henceforth nothing at all. Faith is ceasing from the creature and coming to the Creator. It is looking out of self to Christ, turning the eye entirely from any good thing that is here within me, and looking for every blessing to those open veins, to that poor bleeding heart, to that thorn-crowned head of him whom God hath set forth "to be the propitiation for our sins, and not for our sins only, but for the sins of the whole world."

Well, having thus described the way, I now come to my real business of removing these stones.

1. A very common impediment in the pathway of the soul that is desiring to be saved, is *the recollection of its past life.* "Oh," saith the sinner, "I dare not trust Christ, because my past sins have been of an unusually black dye. I have been no common sinner, but I have been one singled out from the herd, a very monster of sin. I have taken the highest degree in the devil's college, and have become a master of Belial. I have learned to sit in the seat of the scornful, and have taught others to rebel against God." Ah, soul, I know very well what this

impediment is, for once it laid in my way, and very sorely did it trouble me. Before I thought upon my soul's salvation, I dreamed that my sins were very few. All my sins were dead, as I imagined, and buried in the grave-yard of forgetfulness. But that trumpet of conviction which aroused my soul to think of eternal things, sounded a resurrection-note to all my sins, and oh, how they rose up in multitudes countless as the sands of the sea! Now, I saw that my very thoughts were enough to damn me, that my words would sink me lower than hell; and as for my acts of sin, they now began to be a stench in my nostrils, so that I could not bear them. I recollect the time when I reckoned that the most defiled creature, the most loathsome and contemptible, was a better thing than myself; for I had so grossly and grievously sinned against Almighty God. Ah, my brethren, it may be that this morning your old oaths are echoing back from the walls of your memory. You recollect how you have cursed God, and you say, "Can I, dare I trust him whom I have cursed?" And your old lusts are now rising before you; midnight sins stare you in the face, and snatches of the lascivious song are being yelled in the ear of your poor convinced conscience. And all your sins as they rise up, cry, "Depart, thou accursed one! Depart! thou hast sinned thyself out of grace! Thou art a condemned soul! Depart! There is no hope, there is no mercy for thee!"

Now, permit me in the strength and name of God to remove this stumbling-block out of your way. Sinner, I tell thee that all thy sins, be they never so many, cannot destroy thee if thou dost believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. If now thou castest thyself simply on the merits of Jesus, "Though thy sins be as scarlet, they shall be as wool." *Only believe.* Dare to believe that Christ is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him. Take him at his word and trust him. And thou hast a warrant for doing it; for remember it is written, "The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from *all sin.*" Thou art commanded to believe; therefore, be thou never so black a sinner, the command is thy warrant—oh, may God help thee to obey the command! Now, just as thou art, cast thyself on Christ. It is not the greatness of the sinner that is the difficulty,

it is the hardness of the sinner's heart. If now thou art conscious of the most awful guilt, thy guilt becomes as nothing in the eye of God, when once he sees the blood of Christ sprinkled upon thee. I tell thee more: if thy sins were ten thousand times as many as they be, yet the blood of Christ is able to atone for them all. Only dare to believe that. Now, by a venturesome faith trust thyself in Christ. If thou art the most sick of all the wretches that ever this divine physician essayed to cure, so much the more glory to *him*. When a physician cures a man of some little disease, what credit doth he get? But when he heals a man who is all over diseased, who has become but a putrid mass, then there is glory to the physician. And so will there be to Christ when he saveth thee.

But to put this block out of the way once for all. Remember, sinner, that all the while thou dost not believe in Christ, thou art adding to thy sin this great sin of *not believing, which is the greatest sin in the world*. But if thou obey God in this matter of putting thy trust in Christ, God's own Word is guaranteed that thy faith shall be rewarded, and thou shalt find that thy sins, which are many, are all forgiven thee. By the side of Saul of Tarsus, and of her out of whom was cast seven devils, shalt thou one day stand. With the thief shalt thou sing of love divine, and with Manasseh shalt thou rejoice in him who can wash away the foulest crimes. Oh, I pray God there may be some one in this great crowd to-day, who may be saying in his heart, "Sir, you have described *me*. I do feel that I am the blackest sinner anywhere, but I will risk it, I will put my trust in Christ and Christ alone." Ah, soul, God bless thee; thou art an accepted one. If thou canst do this this morning, I will be God's hostage that he will be true to thee and true to his Son, for never sinner perished yet that dared to trust the precious blood of Christ.

2. Now let me endeavor to remove another stumbling block. Many an awakened sinner is troubled because of *the hardness of his heart and the lack of what he thinks to be true penitence*. "Oh,' saith he, "I can believe that however great my sins are they can be forgiven; but I do not feel the evil of my sins as I ought:—

"My heart how dreadful hard it is;
How heavy here it lies;
Heavy and cold within my breast,
Just like a rock of ice."

"I cannot feel," says one; "I cannot weep; I have heard of the repentance of others, but I seem to be just like a stone. My heart is petrified, it will not quake at all the thunders of the law, it will not melt before all the wooings of Christ's love." Ah, poor heart, this is a common stumbling-block in the way of those who are really seeking Christ. But let me ask thee one question. Dost thou read anywhere in the Word of God that those who have hard hearts are not commanded to believe? Because if thou canst find such a passage as that, I will be sorry enough to see it; but, then, I may excuse thee for saying, "I cannot trust Christ, because my heart is hard." Do you not know that the Scripture runs thus? "Whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life." Now, if thou believest, though thy heart be never so hard, thy believing saves thee; and what is more, thy believing shall yet soften thy heart. If thou canst not feel thy need of a Saviour as thou wouldst, remember that when thou hast a Saviour thou wilt begin then to find out more and more how great was thy need of him.

Why, I believe that many persons find out their needs by receiving the supply. Have you never walked along the street, and looking in at a shop window have seen an article, and have said, "Why, that is just what I want?" How do you know that? Why, you saw the thing and then you wanted it. And I believe there is many a sinner who, when he is hearing about Christ Jesus, is led to say, "That is just what I want." Did not he know it before? No, poor soul, not till he saw Christ. I find my sense of need of Christ is ten times more acute now than it was before I found Christ. I *thought* I wanted him for a good many things then, but now I *know* I want him for everything. I thought there were some things which I could not do without him; but *now* I find that without him I can do nothing. But you say, "Sir, I must repent before I come to Christ." Find such a passage in the Word if you can. Doth not the Word say, "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a

Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins?" Doth not one of our hymns translate that verse into rhyme, and put it thus:—

> "True belief and true repentance,
> Every grace that brings us nigh—
> Without money,
> Come to Jesus Christ, and buy"?

Oh, these graces are not of nature's spinning. We cannot make these in the loom of the creature. If you would know your need of Christ, take him now by faith, and sense and feeling shall follow in the rear. Trust him now for everything. Dare to trust him. Hard as your heart is, say, "Just as I am, without a plea, but that thou commandest me, and bid'st me come, I come to thee!" Thy heart shall be softened by the sight of Christ, and love divine shall so sweetly commend itself to thee, that the heart which terrors could not move shall be dissolved by love.

Do understand me, my dear hearers. I want to preach in the broadest manner I possibly can this morning the doctrine that we are justified by faith alone; that man is commanded to believe; and that altogether apart from anything in man, man has a right to believe. Not from any preparation that he feels, not from anything good he discerns in himself; but he has a right to believe, simply because he is commanded to believe; and if relying upon the fact that he is commanded, God the Holy Spirit enables him to believe that faith will surely save the soul, and deliver him from the wrath to come. Let me take up, then, that stumbling stone about hardness of heart. Oh, soul, trust Christ, and thy heart shall be softened. And may God the Holy Spirit enable thee to trust him, hard heart and all, and then thy hard heart shall soon be turned into a heart of flesh, and thou shalt love him who hath loved thee.

3. Now for a third stumbling-block. "Oh," saith some poor soul, "I do not know whether I believe or not, sir. Sometimes I do believe; but oh, *it is such little faith* I have, that I cannot think Christ can save me." Ah, there you are again, you see, looking to yourself. This has made many trip and fall. I

pray God I may put this out of your way. Poor sinner, remember it is not the *strength* of thy faith that saves thee, but the *reality* of thy faith. What is more, it is not even the reality of thy faith that saves thee, it is the object of thy faith. If thy faith be fixed on Christ, though it seems to be in itself a line no thicker than a spider's web, it will hold thy soul throughout time and eternity. For remember, it is not the thickness of this cable of faith, it is the strength of the anchor which imparts strength to the cable, and so shall hold thy ship in the midst of the most fearful storm. The faith that saves man is sometimes so small that the man himself cannot see it. A grain of mustard seed is the smallest of all seeds, and yet if thou hast but that quantity of faith, thou art a saved man. Remember what the poor woman did. She did not come and take hold of Christ's person with her hand, she did not throw her arms about his knees; but she stretched out her finger, and then—she did not touch Christ's feet, or even his dress—she touched but the ravelling, the fringe of his garment, and she was made whole. If thy faith be but as little as that, seek to get more of it, but still remember that it will save thee. Jesus Christ himself compares Little-faith to a smoking flax. Does it burn? is there any fire at all? No, there is nothing but a little smoke, and that is most offensive. "Yes," saith Jesus, "but I will not quench it."

Again, he compares it to a bruised reed. Of what service is it? It is broken; you cannot bring music from it; it is but a reed when it is whole, and now it is a bruised reed. Break it, snap it, throw it away? "No," says he, "I will not break the bruised reed." Now, if that is the faith thou hast, the faith of the smoking flax, the faith of the bruised reed, thou art saved. Thou wilt have many a trial and many a trouble in going to heaven with so little faith as that, for when there is little wind to a boat there must be much tugging at the oar; but still there will be wind enough to land thee in glory, if thou dost simply trust Christ, be that trust never so feeble. Remember, a little child belongs to the human race as much as the greatest giant; and so a babe in grace is as truly a child of God as is Mr. Great-heart, who can fight all the giants on the road. And thou mays't be as much an heir of heaven in thy minority, in the infancy of

thy grace, as thou wilt be when thou shalt have expanded into the full grown Christian, and shalt become a perfect man in Christ Jesus. It is not, I tell thee, the *strength of thy faith*, but *the object* of thy faith. It is the blood, not the hyssop; not the hand that smites the lintel, but the blood that secures the Israelite in the day when God's vengeance passes by. Let that stumbling-block be taken out of the way.

4. "But," saith another, "I do think sometimes I have a little faith, but *I have so many doubts and fears.* I am tempted every day to believe that Jesus Christ did not die for me, or that my belief is not genuine, or that I never experienced the regenerating influence of the Holy Spirit. Tell me, Sir, can I be a true believer in Christ if I have doubts and fears?" My answer is simply this, there is no Scripture which saith, that "He that believeth, shall be damned, if that faith be mixed with doubts." "He that believeth shall be saved," be that faith never so little, and even though it be intermingled with multitudes of doubts and fears. You remember that memorable story of our Saviour, when he was on board a ship with his disciples. The winds roared, the ship rocked to and fro, the mast was strained, the sails were rent, and the poor disciples were full of fear:—"Lord, save us, or we perish." Here were doubts. What did Jesus say when he rebuked them? "Why are ye fearful"—O ye of *no* faith? No; "O ye of *little* faith." So there may be little faith where there are great doubts. There is light at eventide in the air; even though there is a great deal of darkness, yet there is light. And if thy faith should never come to noon-day, if it do but come to twilight, thou art a saved man.

Nay, more, if it doth not come to twilight, if thy faith is but starlight, nay, candlelight, nay, a spark—if it be but a glow-worm spark, thou art saved; and all thy doubts, and all thy fears, and thy distresses, terrible though they may be, can never trample thee in the dust, can never destroy thy soul. Do you not know that the best of God's children are exercised with doubts and fears even to the last? Look at such a man as John Knox. There was a man who could face the frowns of a world, who could speak like a king to kings, and fear no man; yet on his dying bed he was troubled about his interest in Christ, because he was

tempted to self-righteousness. If such a man have doubts, dost *thou* expect to live without them? If God's brightest saints are exercised, if Paul himself keeps under his body lest he should be a castaway, why, how canst thou expect to live without clouds? Oh, my dear man, drop the idea that the prevalence of thy doubts disproves the truth of the promise. Again, believe. away with all thy doubts; sink or swim, cast thyself on Jesus; and thou canst not be lost, for his honor is engaged to save every soul that puts its trust in him.

5. "Ah," says another, "but you have not yet hit upon my fear." I used, when I first knew the Saviour, to try myself in a certain manner, and often did I throw stumbling blocks in my path through it, and therefore I can speak very affectionately to any of you who are doing the same. Sometimes I would go up into my chamber, and by way of self-examination, I used to ask myself this question—*Am I afraid to die?* If I should drop down dead in my chamber, can I say that I should joyfully close my eyes? Well, it often happened that I could not honestly say so. I used to feel that death would be a very solemn thing. Ah, then I said, "I have never believed in Christ, for if I had put my trust in the Lord Jesus, I should not be afraid to die, but I should be quite confident." I do not doubt that there are many here who are saying, "Sir, I cannot follow Christ, because I am afraid to die; I cannot believe that Jesus Christ will save me, because the sight of death makes me tremble." Ah, poor soul, there are many of God's blessed ones, who through fear of death have been much of their lifetime subject to bondage. I know precious children of God now: I believe that when they die, they will die triumphantly; but I know this, that the thought of death is never pleasing to them. And this is accounted for, because God has stamped on nature that law, the love of life and self-preservation. And again, the man that hath kindred and friends, it is natural enough that he should scarce like to leave behind those that are so dear. I know that when he gets more grace he will rejoice in the thought of death; but I do know that there are many who could die triumphantly, who, now, in the prospect of death, feel afraid of it.

I remember my aged grandfather once preached a sermon

which I have not forgotten. He was preaching from the text "The God of all grace," and he somewhat interested the assembly, after describing the different kinds of grace that God gave, by saying at the end of each period, "But there is one kind of grace that you do not want." After each sentence there came the like, "But there is one kind of grace you do not want." And, then, he wound up by saying, "You don't want dying grace in living moments, but you shall have dying grace when you want it." Now, you are testing yourself by a condition in which you are not placed. If you are placed in the condition, you shall have grace enough if you put your trust in Christ. In a party of friends we were discussing the question, whether if the days of martyrdom should come, we were prepared to be burned. Well, now, I must frankly say, that speaking as I feel to-day, I am not prepared to be burned. But I do believe if there were a stake in Smithfield, and I knew that I were to be burned there at one o'clock, that I should have grace enough to be burned at one o'clock; but I have not yet got to a quarter past twelve, and the time has not come yet. Do not expect dying grace, until you want it, and when the time comes, you may be sure you will have sufficient grace to bear it. Cast out that stumbling-block, then. Rest thyself on Christ, and trust him to help thee in thy dying hour.

6. Another most grievous perplexity to many a seeking soul is this: "Oh, I would trust Christ, but *I feel no joy.* I hear the children of God singing sweetly about their privileges. I hear them saying they have been to the top of Pisgah and have viewed the promised land, have taken a pleasant prospect of the world to come; but oh, my faith yields me no joy. I hope I do believe, but at the same time I have none of those raptures. My worldly troubles press heavily upon me, and sometimes even my spiritual woes are greater than I can bear." Ah, poor soul, let me cast out that stone from thy road. Remember, it is not written "he that is joyful shall be saved," but "he that *believeth* shall be saved." Thy faith will make thee joyful by-and-by; but it is as powerful to save thee even when it does not make thee rejoice. Why, look at many of God's people, how sad and sorrowful they have been. I know they ought not to be. This

is their sin; but still it is such a sin that it does not destroy the efficacy of faith. Notwithstanding all the sorrows of the saint, faith still keeps alive, and God is still true to his promise Remember, it is not what you feel that saves you; it is what you believe. It is not feeling, but believing. "We walk by faith, not by sight." When I feel my soul as cold as an iceberg, as hard as a rock, and as sinful as Satan, yet even then faith ceases not to justify. Faith prevails as truly in the midst of sad feelings as of happy feelings, for then, standing alone, it proves the majesty of its might. Believe, O son of God, believe in him, and look not for aught in thyself.

7. Then, again, there are many that are distressed because *they have blasphemous thoughts.* Here, too, I can heartily sympathise with many. I remember a certain narrow and crooked lane in a certain country town, along which I was walking one day, while I was seeking the Saviour. On a sudden the most fearful oaths that any of you can conceive rushed through my mind. I put my hand to my mouth to prevent the utterance. I had not, that I know of, ever heard those words; and I am certain that I had never used in my life, from my youth up, so much as one of them, for I had never been profane. But these things sorely beset me; for half an hour together the most fearful imprecations would dash through my brain. Oh, how I groaned and cried before God. That temptation passed away; but ere many days it was renewed again; and when I was in prayer, or when I was reading the Bible, these blasphemous thoughts would pour in upon me more than at any other time. I consulted with an aged godly man about it. He said to me, "Oh, all this many of the people of God have proved before you. But," said he, "do you hate these thoughts?" "I do," I truly said. "Then," said he, "they are not yours; serve them as the old parishes used to do with vagrants—whip them and send them on to their own parish. Groan over them, repent of them, and send them on to the devil, the father, to whom they belong—for they are not yours." Do you not recollect how John Bunyan hits off the picture? He says, when Christian was going through the valley of the shadow of death, "There stepped up one to him, and whispered blasphemous thoughts into his ear, so that poor

Christian thought they were his own thoughts; but they were not his thoughts at all, but the injections of a blasphemous spirit." So when you are about to lay hold on Christ, Satan will ply all his engines and try to destroy you. He cannot bear to lose one of his slaves; he will invent a fresh temptation for each believer, so that he may not put his trust in Christ." Now, come, poor soul, notwithstanding all these blasphemous thoughts in thy soul, dare to put thy trust in Christ. Even should those thoughts have been more blasphemous than any thou hast ever heard, come trust in Christ, come cast thyself on him. I have heard that when an elephant is going over a bridge he will sound the timber with his foot to see if it will bear him over. Come thou, who thinkest thyself a great sinner, here is a bridge that is strong enough for thee, even with all these thoughts of thine:—"All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven thee." Throw that in Satan's face, and trust thyself in Christ.

8. One other stumbling-block, and I will have done. Some there be that say, "Oh, sir, I would trust in Christ to save me *if I could see that my faith brought forth fruits.* When I would do good, evil is present with me." Excuse my always bringing in my own feelings as an illustration, but in preaching to tried sinners, the testimony of one's own experience is generally more powerful than any other illustration. It is not, believe me, any display of egotism, but the simple desire to come home to you, that makes me state what I have felt myself. The first Sunday after I came to Christ, I went to a Methodist chapel. The sermon was upon this text: 'O, wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" I had just got as far as that in the week. I knew that I had put my trust in Christ, and I knew that, when I sat in that house of prayer, my faith was simply and solely fixed on the atonement of the Redeemer. But I had a weight on my mind, because I could not be as holy as I wanted to be. I could not live without sin. When I rose in the morning I thought I would abstain from every hard word, from every ev l thought and look; and I came up to that chapel groaning, because "when I would do good evil was present with me." The minister said that when Paul wrote

the verse I have quoted, he was not a Christian; that this was his experience before he knew the Lord. Ah, what error, for I know that Paul was a Christian, and I know the more Christians look to themselves the more they will have to groan, because they cannot be what they want to be. What, you will not believe in Christ until you are perfect? Then you will never believe in him. You will not trust the precious Jesus until you have no sins to trust him with! Then you will never trust him at all. For rest assured, you will never be perfect till you see the face of God in heaven.

I knew one man who thought himself a perfect man, and that man was hump-backed. This was my rebuke to his pride, "Surely if the Lord gave you a perfect soul, he would give you a perfect body to carry it in." Perfection will not be found this side of the grave. Your business is to trust in Christ. You must depend on nothing but the blood of Christ. Trust in Christ and you stand secure. "He that believeth on the Son of God hath everlasting life." It is our duty to fight against corruption; it is our privilege to conquer it; it is our honor to feel that we are fighting against sin; it shall be our glory one day to tread it beneath our feet. But to-day, except not complete victory. Your very consciousness of sin proves that you are alive. The very fact that you are not what you want to be, proves that there is some high and noble thoughts in you that could not come by nature. You were content with yourself some six weeks ago, were you not? And the fact that you are discontent now, proves that God has put a new life into you which makes you seek after a higher and better element in which to breathe. When you become what you want to be on earth, then despair. When the law justifies you, then you have fallen from grace; for Paul has said, "When we are justified by the law, we are fallen from grace." But while I feel that the law condemns me, it is my joy to know that believing in Christ, "There is no condemnation to him that is in Christ Jesus, who walks not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

And now, though I have been trying to clear the way, I feel conscious that very likely I have been putting a stone or two in the road myself. May God forgive me—it is a sin of inadvertence. I

would lay this road as straight and clear as ever was turnpike road between one city and another. Sinner, there is nothing which can rob thee of *thy right* to believe in Christ. Thou art freely invited to come to the marriage banquet. The table is spread, and the invitation freely given. There are no porters at the door to keep thee out; there are none to ask a ticket of admission of thee.

"Let not *concience* make you linger,
Nor of fitness fondly dream;
All the fitness he requireth
Is to feel your need of him;
This he gives you—
'Tis his Spirit's rising beam."

Come to him just as thou art. But, ah, I know that when we sit in our studies it seems a light thing to preach the gospel and make people believe in Christ; but when we come to practice, it is the hardest thing in the world. If I were to tell you to do some great thing you would do it; but simply, when it is, "Believe, wash, and be clean," you will not do it. If I said, "Give me ten thousand pounds," you would give it. You would crawl a thousand miles on your hands and knees, or drink the bitterest draught that was ever concocted; but this trusting in Christ is too hard for your proud spirit. Ah, sinner, art thou too proud to be saved? Come, man, I beseech thee, by the love of Christ, by the love of thine own soul, come with me, and let us go together to the foot of the cross. Believe on him who hangs groaning there; oh, put thy trust in him, who is risen from the dead, and has led captivity captive. And if thou trustest him, poor sinner, thou shalt not be disappointed; it shall not be trust misplaced. Again I say it, I am content to be lost, if thou art lost trusting in Christ. I dare to say *that*, and to look *that* boldly in the face; for thou wouldst be the first sinner that was ever cast away trusting in Jesus. "But, oh," saith one, "I cannot think that such a wretch as I am can have a right to believe." Soul, I tell thee it is not whether thou art a wretch, or not a wretch. Thou art commanded to believe. And when a command comes home with power, the power comes with the com-

mand; and he who is commanded, being made willing, casts himself on Christ, and he believes, and is saved.

I have labored this morning to try and make myself as clear as I can about this doctrine. I know if any man is saved it is the work of God the Holy Ghost from first to last. "If any man is regenerate, it is not of the will of the flesh, nor of blood, but of God." But I do not see how that great truth interferes with this other, "Whomsoever believeth in Christ shall be saved." And I would again, even to the falling down on my knees, as though God did beseech you by me, pray you, "In Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." And this is the reconciliation, "That ye believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent," that ye trust Christ. Do you understand me? That ye cast yourself on him; that ye depend on nothing but what he has done. Saved you must be, lost you cannot be, if you fling yourself wholly upon Christ, and cast the whole burden of your sins, your doubts, your fears, and your anxieties wholly there. Now, this is preaching free grace doctrine. And if any wonder how a Calvinist can preach thus, let me say that this is the preaching that Calvin preached, and better still, it is the preaching of our Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles. We have divine warrant when we tell you, "He that believeth and is baptised, shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned." AMEN.

SERMON III.

PIETY REPROVED AND JUSTIFIED.

[This Sermon was delivered at New Park Street Chapel, April 8th, 1860. The author calls it "The jeer of sarcasm, and the retort of Piety," a title not very expressive of the main drift of the discourse. The first half of it will be found peculiarly applicable to the countless instances of social and domestic hindrances to piety, and calculated much to encourage those who are opposed in the ways of godliness by relatives and associates.]

"Then David returned to bless his household. And Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David, and said, How glorious was the king of Israel to-day, who uncovered himself to day in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the vain fellows shamelessly uncovereth himself! And David said unto Michal, It was before the Lord, which chose me before thy father, and before all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the Lord, over Israel: therefore will I play before the Lord. And I will yet be more vile than thus, and will be base in my own sight: and of the maidservants which thou hast spoken of, of them shall I be had in honor.—2 Samuel, vi. 20–22.

You will remember the remarkable passage of Sacred History which I related to you this morning; how David sought on one occasion to bring up the ark of God from Kirjath-jearim to Jerusalem; but neglecting God's law, they put the ark upon a cart, instead of carrying it upon the shoulders of the Levites; and as one mistake very soon leads to another, when the oxen stumbled, Uzzah put forth his hand to steady the ark, and pre-

vent its falling, and God smote him there for his error, and he died. It was an awful moment. The pulse of that vast assembly beating high with solemn festivity, receives a sudden check. The trumpet which erstwhile sent forth its cheerful blast, with the sacred melody of cornet, of psaltery, and of harp—all are hushed in one instant. Dulness and terror seize the minds of all. They separate to their homes; the ark is carried into a private house adjoining, the residence of that eminent servant of God, Obed-edom, and there it tarried for the space of three months. David at last recovered his spirits, and a second time having carefully read over God's law concerning the removal of the ark, he went down to the house of Obed-edom to carry it away. The priests this time lift up the ark upon their shoulders by means of the golden staves which passed through golden rings, and so uphold the ark. Finding that they were not smitten, but that they lived, and were able to carry the ark, David paused and offered seven bullocks, and seven rams as a sacrifice to God. Then, putting off his royal robe, laying aside his crown, he dressed himself like a priest, put on a linen ephod in order that he might have ease in the exercise which he meant to take; and so, in the midst of all the people, like the poorest and meanest of them, he went before the ark, and playing with his harp, he danced before the Lord with all his might.

While he was so doing, he passed by his own house, and Michal his wife, looking out, thought it was a strange thing to see the king wearing so paltry a robe as a linen ephod. She had rather see him arrayed in some goodly Babylonish garment of fine linen; or she desired to see him clothed with his usual garments, and she despised him in her heart, and when he came in, the first word she uttered was a taunt—"How glorious was the king of Israel to-day!" then she exaggerated what he did; her spleen found vent in sarcasm; she made it out that he had behaved worse than he could have done. He had simply divested himself of his robes, and acted like the rest of the people in playing before God. She accused him of immodesty; this was, of course, but a pitiful satire, he having in all things acted blamelessly, though humbly, like the rest of the people. His reply to her was with unusual tartness. Seldom did he seem to lose his

temper for a moment, but in this case he half did so at any rate. His answer was, "It was before the Lord which chose me before thy father, and before all his house." Thus significantly, and as it were ominously did he remind her of her pedigree. And because she had slighted her husband when he had acted in God's service according to the dictates of his heart, the Lord struck her with a curse—the greatest curse which an Eastern woman could possibly know—a curse, moreover, which wiped out the last expiring hope of her family pride—she went childless to the day of her death.

This picture is designed to teach us some wholesome lesson. I want you to look at it. You remember that old saying of ours—"We should expect some danger nigh, when we possess delight." When I see David dancing, I am quite sure there will be a darkening of his heart ere long. How happy he looks! His whole countenance radiant with joy! Methinks I hear him shouting loudest of that crowd, "Sing unto the Lord; sing psalms unto him; sing unto him; sing unto him; call ye on his holy name;" and then awaking all the strings of his heart to ecstacy, he sings again, "Sing unto the Lord; come sing unto him; sing psalms unto his name." Perhaps, he was never in a more holy excitement. Ah! David, there is a storm for you somewhere. Now there is a calm, but a tempest is rising.

> "More the treacherous calm I dread,
> Than tempests rolling over-head."

This joy is on the threshold of grief. He blesses the people. After he has ceased from his worship of God, he distributes to every man a flagon of wine, a loaf of bread, and a good piece of flesh, and they all eat and are merry before their God; and David says, "I have blessed the people; I have made them all glad; I will go into my house, and I will give them a blessing there." But he is met on the threshold by his own wife and she in the most sarcastic manner sneers at him—"How glorious was the king of Israel to-day!" Poor David is angry, heart-broken, and sad. His joy is scattered to the winds for awhile;

though he puts her off with a rebuke, doubtless the irony went to his soul; the joy of that day was sorely marred.

> "A Christian man is seldom long at ease,
> When one trouble's gone, another doth him seize."

So saith old John Bunyan; and we may truly say, when we are at the top of a mountain we are not far from the bottom of a valley. When we are riding on the top of one wave it is not long before we shall be in the trough of another. Up hill and down hill is the way to heaven. Chequered must be our path. Golden shades are interwoven with a black ground. We shall have joy, but we must have trial; we shall have transport, but we must have trouble in the flesh.

This evening I shall discourse, first, about *David's trouble;* secondly, *the vindication of his conduct;* and thirdly, *his noble resolution;* and my main purpose will be to stir you all up, if you are ever subject to a trial like this, *to make his resolve and ground it upon his reason.*

1. First, DAVID'S TROUBLE.

His trouble was peculiar. It came from a quarter where he ought least to have expected it. "Oh," saith old master Frampton, "Joab smote Abner *under* his fifth rib; there is many a man that has been smitten *in* his rib too." Saith another, "It is a strange stratagem of Satan to break a man's head with his own bones, and yet many a man hath encountered such rough usage. They that have been the chief joy of our hearts, have often been the means of causing us the most grievous pain." Has it not been to many a Christian woman that her husband has been her greatest enemy in religion, and many a Christian man has found the partner of his own bosom the hardest obstacle in the road to heaven! I will just give you some pictures such as I know to have occurred, and to be occurring every day —they will suit some of you now present. A man has been up to the Lord's house. There was some great work going on; he helped that work; but when he went home, as soon as he entered the door, Michal, Saul's daughter, was there, and she said, "You are mad, you are; you are crazy; you don't know what

to do with your money; you give it away to this and to that; and you leave your children beggars. You are a fool," said she, "you are deceived; you are gone mad with your religion." The man put up with it and bore it patiently, though it entered into his very heart, and he turned away sorely troubled. There was another,—a woman this time. She went up to the house of her Master's brethren, and they made merry there, and there was joy in that place. Her heart was carried away with elevated emotions, and on her road home there was a bliss unspeakable in her soul. As soon as she entered the door the question was asked, "What brings you home so late?—why didn't you stop out all night? You look very happy. I dare say you have been among those canting hypocrites, haven't you?" She said nothing; brooked it patiently; but the dart had gone into her heart, and she felt it sorely, that when she served her God with a good conscience, it should be thrown in her teeth as if she had done wrong.

There is many a young man that dances before God with all his might when he has heard about the joyous things of the covenant of grace. He has forgotten all his cares and all his troubles, and he goes back, and perhaps this time it is his own brother, who, when they retire to rest, begins to ridicule him. "Where have you been to-day? How have you been spending your Sunday? I dare say you have been hearing So-and-so. What good can he do you? What has he got to tell you?" and there is a laugh; no names are contemptuous enough. You are called "a fool." It is supposed that no man in his senses will be a Christian; to think about eternal things is the highest mark of folly. For one short hour to turn one's thoughts away from this poor earth and muse upon things eternal is the mark of madness! Now, we judge the madness lies on the other side. As we weigh the levities of this life and the realities of the life to come in the scale of judgment, the madness is found in the extreme on the other hand with the despisers, and not with ourselves. The children of this world never did understand the children of the next, and they never will; "the light came into the world and the darkness comprehended it not." How could it—how could darkness do anything to light except oppose it? It could not be expected that they who serve sin should love

those that serve righteousness. Oil and water will not mix; fire and flood will never lie to sleep in the same cradle; and it cannot be expected that that man-child, the church of God, shall have peace and be happy in the same house with that old giant the church of Satan—the synagogue of the devil. There must be wars and fightings, there must be opposition and conflicts, while there are two natures in the world and two sorts of men. This, then, was the trial David had to endure. And I want you to notice how peculiarly sharp this trial must have been.

Natural affections are so interwoven with a thousand ligaments that they cannot be easily broken; but they are delicate as the finest nerves, and can never be injured without causing the most dolorous sensation. Surely David must remember that Michal was the wife of his youth, and there was gladness in his heart on the day he espoused her, and after all, she had been a good wife to him in many respects. Such reflections would make her alienation from him all the harder to bear. "Oh," he might have said, "she preserved my life once at the risk of her own, when I lay sick in bed, and her father, Saul, had said, 'Bring him in the bed even as he is, that I may slay him.' Did she not let me down the wall in a basket, and then lay an image in the bed, and stuff the pillow with goat's hair, and deceive her father, that so I might escape? Ah," said he, "there was love in that woman's bosom, and how long did she remain faithful while I was hunted like a partridge on the mountains." It is true he might call to recollection that in his worst times she had forgotten him, but now she had come back to him, and David sincerely loved her; for you recollect that when Abner wanted to make peace with David, his stipulation was, "Except thou bring Michal unto me, I will not see thy face;" so that he had a thorough affection for her, and she had done him good. Yet the delight of his heart is become the foe of his spirit. She it is who now laughs at him for what he had done with a pure desire to serve God, and with a holy joy in doing it. Ay, that is the unkindest cut of all, that goes to the very quick of a man, when the one he loves and the one who is worth all his love, notwithstanding, throws in his teeth his zeal for Christ.

Ah! brethren, it is a happy thing when we are enabled to re-

joice together in our family relationships; when husband and wife help each other on the path to heaven. There can be no happier position than that of the Christian man who finds in every holy wish he has for God, a helper; who finds that often she outstrips him; that when he would do something she suggests something more; when he would serve his Master there is a hint given that more yet might be done, and no obstacle put in the way, but every assistance rendered. Happy is that man and blessed is he. He has received a treasure from God, the like of which could not be bought for diamonds, and much fine gold could not be exchanged for it. That man is blessed of the Most High; he is heaven's favorite, and he may rejoice in the special favor of his God. But when it is the other way, and I know it is the case with some of you, then it is a sore trial indeed. Perhaps, though a careful, cautious, prudent, and excellent worldly woman, she cannot see with you in the things which you love in the kingdom of God, and when you have done something which in the excess of your zeal seems to be but little, she thinks it inordinate and extravagant. "Oh," says she, "do you go and mix with these people? Does king David go and wear a linen ephod like a peasant? Do you go and sit down with that rabble? *You?* you can stand up for your dignity—put 'esquire' after your name, and yet walk in the street with any beggar that likes to call himself a Christian. You," says she, "you that are so cautious in everything else, you seem to have lost your head when you think about your religion;" so she will be sarcastic and shoot words like arrows at that man in such a way that every one of them may cause a wound. And now let me say here, that this is more frequently done by the husband against the wife, and more frequently still by the two fellow-apprentices or workmen against one another. It is a curious thing that when men are going to hell there is no one to stop them. "Make way, make way; open the toll-bars there; stand clear, do not let there be a dog in his path! Make way for him!" Is not that the cry of the world? But here comes a man who wants to go to heaven. 'Block his path up; throw stones in the way; make it as difficult as ever it can be!" Ay, and good people too; good people, not knowing what they are doing—they are employed by Satan to impede our path to heaven. Poor souls;

they do not know better. Satan enters into them and sets them upon us, to see if they cannot in some way or other mar our integrity, because we love the whole gospel, and will not be content to have a part only. Ah, brothers and sisters, this is a sore trial, but know that your afflictions are not strange or unusual: the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

II. Now we have David's justification.

What did David say in extenuation of what he had done? He said, "It was before the Lord, which chose me before thy father, and before all his house, and appointed me ruler over the people, over Israel, therefore will I play before the Lord." David's justification of his acts was God's election of him. Do you not see the doctrine of election here? God had chosen him before her father, Saul. "Now," says David, "inasmuch as by special love and divine favor I was lifted up from the common people, and made a king, I will stoop down to the common people once again, and I will praise my God as the people do, robed in their vestments, dancing as they dance, and playing on the harp, even as the rest of the joyous crowd are doing." Gratitude was the key-note of his worship. Let the worldling say of the Christian, when he is acting true to his Master, "You are enthusiastic;" our reply is, "Yes, we are; we may be considered enthusiastic, if you judge us by ordinary rules, but we are not so to be judged; we consider that we have been loved with special love; that God has been pleased to forgive us our sins, to accept us of his sovereign grace, and give us the privileges of his children. We do not expect ordinary men to do for God what the Christian would. "No," saith he,

> "Love I much, I've more forgiven,
> I am a miracle of grace."

If he gives more to the cause of God than other men think of giving, still it seems very little to him, for he says—

> "Were the whole realm of nature mine,
> That were a tribute far too small;
> Love so amazing, so divine,
> Demands my soul, my life, my all."

Michal may say we have acted madly; she would act the same if she felt as we feel. Men of the world may say we act extravagantly, and go beyond the rule of prudence; they would go beyond the rule of prudence, too, if they had been partakers of like love, and received like favor. The man who feels himself to have been chosen of God from before the foundation of the world, who has a solid conviction that his sins are all blotted out, that he is God's own child, that he is accepted in the Beloved, that his heaven is secure, I say there is nothing extravagant for that man to do. He will go and be a missionary to the heathen, cross the seas with his life in his hands, and live in the midst of a heathen population. Men say, "What for? He can gain but a miserable pittance to sustain life, after giving up the most flowery prospects; he must be mad." Mad, no doubt, you may account him, if you judge as Michal judged; but if you consider that God has chosen him, and loved him with a special love, it is but reasonable, even less than might have been expected, that such a man is ready to sacrifice himself for Christ. Take another example. Let me cull a picture from the memoir of one in years gone by. He preaches in a church in Glasgow; he is just inducted into the church, preferment lies open before him, he may speedily be made a bishop, if he likes. He seeks it not. Without mitre or benefice, he takes to Kennington common and Moorfields, goes to every stump and hedge in the country, so that he is Rural Dean of all the commons everywhere, and Canon Residentiary nowhere. He is pelted with rotten eggs; he finds one time that his forehead has been laid open in the midst of the sermon, while he has been laying men's hearts open. Men say he is fanatical. What did Whitfield need to do this for? What did John Wesley need to go all over the country for? Why, there is the Rev. Mr. So-and-so, with his fourteen livings, and never preaches at all—good man he is. "Oh," say the world, "and he makes a good thing of it, depend upon it." That is a common saying, "He makes a good thing of it." And when he died, he did make a good thing of it, for he silenced the tongue of slander, leaving nothing but an imperishable reputation behind.

When Mr. Wesley was laboring abundantly, they said, "He

is a rich man;" and taxed him for his plate very heavily. He said, "You may take my plate at any rate if you like, for all I have is two silver spoons; I have one in London, and one in York, and by the grace of God, I shall never have any more as long as there are poor people about." But the people said, "Depend upon it, they are making a good thing of it; why cannot they be still as other people." The only reason why they could not, was just this: that God had chosen them before the rest of mankind; they felt that they were special objects of divine favour, and they knew their calling: it was not only to make them blessed, but to make them a blessing. What other men could not do, or would not do, they did; they could not rest before they did it; they could dance like David before the ark, degrading the clerical character; they could bring down the fine dignity of the parson, to stand like a mountebank before the shows of Moorfields, or in the Spa-fields' riding-schools; they could come down on stage boards to preach the gospel; they were not ashamed to be like David, shamelessly uncovering themselves like lewd fellows, in the eyes of the handmaidens of their servants:—they thought all this disgrace was honour, and all this shame was glory; and they bore it all, for their justification was found in the fact that they believed God had chosen them; and therefore they chose to suffer for Christ's sake rather than reign without Christ.

And now, brothers and sisters, I say this to you; if you think God has chosen you and yet do not feel that he has done great things for you, or holds any strong claims upon your gratitude, then shun the cross. If you have never had much forgiven, get over the stile, and go down the green lane into Bye-path meadow, if it is comfortable walking, go down there. If you do not owe much to the Lord Jesus Christ, shirk his service, go up in the corner there when the trumpet plays, and tell Michal you are very sorry you have displeased her. Say, "I will never do the like again, trust me; I am sorry you do not like it; I hope you will now forgive me; but as I hold religion to be a thing to please everyone as well as myself, I will never dance before the ark again." Do that now if you are under no very great obligation to the Father of spirits, and have never tasted the dis-

tinguishing love of God to your souls. My brethren, there are some of you ready to start up from your seats, and say, "Well, I am not that man!" And assuredly, as your pastor, I can look on some of you that have had much forgiven. Not long ago you were up to the throat in drunkenness; you could blaspheme God. Not very long ago perhaps you carried on dishonesty, and never entered the house of God. Some of you were frivolous, gay, careless, despisers of God, without hope, without Christ, strangers to the commonwealth of Israel. Well, and what brought you here now? Why, sovereign grace has done it; you would not have been here if you had been left to yourselves, if God had done no more for you than for other men, you would have been left to go on in the same course as before. Now the shutters are up; that shop which used to be open all day Sunday is closed. Now the pipe and the beer, or dissipations more refined, that used to occupy the whole of the Sunday afternoon, with five or six jolly companions, are put away, and there is the Bible and prayer now, and the oath is not heard as before. I suppose you set this change of character down to sovereign grace, and you are ready to sing with all of us:—

> "Grace led my roving feet
> To tread the heavenly road,
> And new supplies each hour I meet
> While pressing on to God."

Then the mercy you have received is a complete justification for anything that you may do in God's service, any ecstacy that you may feel when you are worshipping him, and any excess of liberality you may display when you are engaged in pressing on to the kingdom of your Lord and Master. If the Church could once feel this, what an influence it would exert! Truly I may say, without the slightest flattery, I never met with any people on the face of the earth who seemed to have a more thorough belief in this fact, who lived more truly up to this doctrine—than those among whom I minister. I have often gone on my knees before God to thank him for the wondrous things I have seen done by some of the Christians now present. In service they have gone beyond anything I could have asked. I should think

that they would have considered me unreasonable if I had requested it. They have done it without request. At the risk of everything they have served their Master, and not only spent all that they could spare, but have even spared what they could ill afford to spare for the service of Jesus. They have given up social comfort and personal ease, that they might be serving their Master. Such brethren doubtless meet their reward, and if any should say of them, "It is ridiculous, it is absurd, they are carried away with fanatical zeal," I put this answer in their mouths, "Yes, I should be ridiculous, I should be absurd, if I owed no more to God than you; but he has loved me so that I cannot love him enough, much less love him too much; he has loved me at such a rate that I cannot do too much for him; in fact, I feel I cannot do half enough." You being special characters have given to God special service, and God bless you for it; yea, he doth bless you in it. Such was David's justification.

III. Not less worthy of our notice was his RESOLUTION, of which I now come briefly to speak. What did he say? Did he draw back and play the craven, bend his back to the lash of rebuke, and give up the extravagancies of his devotion? No. He said, and said frankly, "I will yet be more vile than thus, and I will be base in mine own sight." Now God grant your resolution may be the same. Whenever the world reproaches you, say, "Well, I thank you for that word, I will strive to deserve it better: if I have incurred your displeasure by my consistency, I will be more consistent, and you shall be more displeased, if you will. If it be a vile thing to serve Christ, I will serve him more than I have ever done, and be viler still; if it be disgraceful to be numbered with the poor, tried and afflicted people, I will be disgraced. Nay, the more disgraced I am, the more happy shall I be; I shall feel that disgrace is honour, that ignominy is glory, that shame and spitting from the lips of enemies is but the same thing as praise and glory from the mouth of Christ." Instead of yielding, go forward, show your enemies that you do not know how to go back, that you are not made of the soft metal of these modern times.

It is said by an old writer, that in the olden times men used

to take care of their houses, but now the houses take care of the men; that they used to eat off oaken porringers, and then they were oaken men; but now they are willow men, can bend anyhow; they are earthenware men, which can be dashed to pieces. Scarcely in politics, in business, or in religion, have you got a man. You see a lot of things which are called men, who turn the way the wind blows. I pray God to send a few men with what the Americans call "grit" in them; men who when they know a thing to be right, will not turn away, or turn aside, or stop; men who will persevere all the more because there are difficulties to meet or foes to encounter; who stand all the more true to their Master because they are opposed; who, the more they are thrust into the fire, the hotter they become; who, just like the bow, the further the string is drawn, the more powerfully will it send forth its arrows, and so, the more they are trodden upon, the more mighty will they become in the cause of truth against error. Resolve, brothers and sisters, when you are in any sort of persecution, to face it with a full countenance. Like a nettle is the persecutor; touch it gently and it will sting you, but grasp it, and it hurts you not. Lay hold of those who oppose you, not with rough vengeance, but with the strong grip of quiet decision, and you have won the day. Yield no principle, no, not the breadth of a hair of that principle. Stand up for every solitary grain of truth; contend for it as for your life. Remember your forefathers, not merely your Christian forefathers, but those who are your progenitors in the faith as Baptists. Remember those who, of old, were cast out of the Christian Church with contempt, because they would not bend to the errors of their times. Think of the snows of the Alps, and call to mind the Waldenses, and the Albigenses, your great forerunners. Think again, of the Lollards, the disciples of Wickliffe; think of your brethren in Germany, who, not many centuries ago, nay, but a century ago, were sewn up in sacks, had their hands chopped off, bled and died—a glorious list of martyrs. Your whole pedigree, from the beginning to the end, is stained with blood. From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been made to suffer the violence of men; and *you!* will you yield? Shall these soft times, these gentle ages, take

away your pristine valor—make you the craven sons of heroic fathers? No, if you are not called to the sufferings of a martyr, yet bear the spirit of a martyr. If you cannot burn as he did in the flesh, burn as he did in the spirit. If you have nothing to endure but the trial of cruel mockings, take it patiently, endure it joyfully, for happy are ye, inasmuch as ye are made partakers of the sufferings of your Divine Master.

Never, I entreat of you, grow faint in your course, but bring more of the love of your hearts into the service of your lives. Never yield one tittle of the truth which God has committed to you, take up the cross and bear it; however weighty, however ignominious, carry it manfully. If the father be turned against the child, and the child against the father, weep over it and mourn it. If the husband be turned against the wife, and the wife against the husband, take care that it is not through your own fault; but if it be for Christ's sake, bear it joyfully, bear it with transport and delight; you are highly honored. You cannot wear the ruby crown of martyrdom and fire—that blazing diadem, but you have got at least a stray jewel out of it; thank God for it, and never shrink, never blush to suffer for his name sake; and give to every laughing Michal the answer, "If this be vile, I purpose to be viler still; if this be shameful, I will be more shameful; if this excite your derision, ye shall laugh louder than ever; your opportunities for making fun of me shall never be wanting, till your disposition to ridicule shall be changed." Oh, that is a glorious way of dealing with adversaries. If a lion is roaring at you, look at him and smile, and he will leave off roaring by-and-bye. When some big dog comes out to bark at you, keep quiet, it is marvellous how easily he is tamed. I was once staying in the north of Scotland, where there was a ferocious dog chained up. He came out and I patted him, and he jumpped up with his fore-feet upon me; I caressed him, and he seemed particularly fond of me. The master came out. "Come away, my dear sir," said he, "that dog will rend you to pieces." But I did not know it, and when I passed by he seemed to know I was not at all afraid of him, so he did'nt meddle with me. In like manner, Christians, be not terrified at your adversaries. They may growl, they may snarl, but do not you shrink back

with fear: it will make them bark the more. Take as little notice of them as possible. Ah! poor things, you can well say, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." Just leave them all alone, and if they must know the reason, tell them what David told Michal—God has chosen you to shew forth his praise. I dare say you may be insane enough in their eyes.

A good friend of mine, when he was told he was mad, said, "Well, if I am mad, you ought to be very patient with me, for fear I should grow worse. If I am mad now, perhaps I might grow wild. So, be gentle with me." There is a good-humored way of rallying in return; only it must be without bitterness. Tell the people who take needless offence, they must try to teach you better; if you have gone so far astray they ought to lead you back again. By degrees they will have done with this raillery, and begin to respect you. If there is one in a family that is looked up to most of all, it is usually that one which all the family abused at one time. He has borne the brunt of opposition; he has held his ground; and he has won the palm of consistency. Give way an inch, and you will have to give way an ell. Yield a single yard, and your enemy will drive you out. Stand right still, calmly, quietly, with the determination that you can die, but you cannot fly; that you could suffer anything, but you could not deny your Master, and your victory is won. Never give an angry word or look; do not imitate Peter in that respect; the best of men are only to be followed as far as they are like their Master. "When you are reviled, revile not again." But suffer patiently all that is said, but when you suffer, do not yield. Remember the motto of the old martyrs. On some of the old martyr books you will see the picture of an anvil, and you might ask, "What does that mean?" It was a common saying of Calvin, "The gospel is an anvil that has broken many a hammer, and will break many hammers yet." Let thine adversary be the hammer, and be thou the anvil. Remember this—"He that endureth to the end shall be saved."

Now, I think I hear some Christian say, "This sermon is not applicable to me." Well, brother, I am glad it is not. I am glad if God has put you in such a gracious position of providence. But, oh, it is applicable to many, very many, I say to

you then, pray for such, mention those who are in bonds as being bound with them. When you are in prayer, and have to thank God that you are a child of pious parents who, so far from opposing you, have done all they could to help you, be very thankful for it, as a privilege to be prized, because so many lack it. It is a happy thing for some of you flowers, that you grow in a conservatory where the air is so very warm and so very mild, but there are some who have to be outside in the frost —pray for these. When you think of the sheep in the fold, take care that you think of those out in the wilderness exposed to the snow storm coming on, perhaps buried in a hollow and ready to expire. Think of them. You may suppose there is very little suffering for Christ now. I speak what I know—there is a vast deal of suffering still. I do not mean burning, I do not mean hanging; I do not mean persecution by law; it is a sort of slow martyrdom. I can tell you how it is effected. Everything a young man does, is thrown in his teeth. Things harmless and indifferent in themselves, are twisted into accusation that he does wrong; if he speaks, his words are brought up against him; if he is silent, it is worse. Whatever he does is misrepresented, and from morning to night there is the taunt always ready. Everything that can be said against his minister is generally used, because the world knows when they find fault with the minister, it stings the people, if they are a loving people, to the quick; and there are insinuations thrown out against the minister for his motives, and there are all things said about God's people too; one says the minister is a "yea-nay" preacher; another says he is too high in doctrine; one will accuse him of being sanctimonious; another will charge him with laxness. Ah, brethren, you need not fear; you can bear witness for the truth whatever is said; you must bear with the slanderer and *forbear*. If they throw aught in your teeth, still stand up for your Lord Jesus. I don't ask you to stand up for me; you will do that I know. Stand up for your Lord and Master; don't yield a single inch; and the day shall come when you shall have honor even in the eyes of those who in the world once laughed at you and put you to open shame.

Before closing, let me say a word or two to this whole congre-

gation. There are three sorts of people upon which my text looks with a dark and appalling frown. First, there are those whose lips are ever quick to curl, whose countenance is ever prompt to sneer, whose tongues are ever ready with a jest profane when *the service of God* crosses their path. I only say to you, beware lest that come upon you. "As he loved cursing, so let it come upon him; as he delighted not in blessing, so let it be far from him." Secondly, there are those who, up to a certain point, favor the worship of God, and the services of the church. But there comes a season of extraordinary service, a revival that demands uncommon energy, and almost before they are themselves aware of it, the repugnance of their hearts finds some strong and unkindly expression. Now let me point *you* to Saul's daughter, and remind you how in one hour *she* proved her pedigree, identified herself with a family which the Lord had rejected, and sealed her own irrevocable doom. Then, thirdly, there is the professor of religion, who with David's trial is awanting David's constancy. Have I sown the seed of gospel truth broadcast among you so often, and hath none fallen in stony places? You may have heard the word, and anon with joy received it; and you may have "dured awhile, though you have no root in yourselves." But let me ask you, when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, are you offended? does it prove a stumbling-block to you? If so, your case is deplorable. Do you parry off the first breath of ridicule with flippant tongue? Did I hear that you said the other day, "Oh, I dont profess anything; I only just go into that chapel now and then to hear the preacher; he rather takes my fancy." Ah! young man, let your conscience witness that you are shrinking back unworthily. You may only dissemble a little at first, but if you are coward enough to dissemble, you may ere long prove infidel enough to apostatize. Brethren and sisters in the Lord, "stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel, in nothing terrified by your adversaries." "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe in his name, but also to suffer for his sake." AMEN.

SERMON IV.

THE TREASURES OF GRACE.

[The fulness of grace in Christ Jesus is a theme on which the devout servants of God love to dwell, and which the devout people of God love to listen to and contemplate. This was preached in Exeter Hall, January 22d, 1860, and is full of the savor and fatness of the Gospel. The frequent and expressive metaphors used will assist the reader the better to understand and retain the subject as presented.]

"The forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."—Ephesians, 1–7.

As is Isaiah among the prophets, so is Paul among the Apostles; each stands forth with singular prominence, raised up by God for a conspicuous purpose, and shining as a star of extraordinary lustre. Isaiah spoke more of Christ, and described more minutely his passion and his death than all the other prophets together. Paul proclaimed the grace of God—free, full, sovereign, eternal grace—beyond all the glorious company of the apostles. Sometimes he soared to such amazing heights, or dived into such unsearchable depths, that even Peter could not follow him. He was ready to confess that "our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given unto him," had written "some things hard to be understood." Jude could write of the judgments of God, and reprove with terrible words, "ungodly men, who turned the grace of God into lasciviousness." But he could not tell out the purpose of grace as it was planned in the eternal mind, or the experience of grace as it is felt and

realized in the human heart, like Paul. There is James again: he, as a faithful minister, could deal very closely with the practical evidences of Christian character. And yet he seems to keep very much on the surface; he does not bore down deep into the substratum on which must rest the visible soil of all spiritual graces. Even John, most favored of all those apostles who were companions of our Lord on earth—sweetly as the beloved disciple writes of fellowship with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ—even John doth not speak of grace so richly as Paul, "in whom God first showed forth all long-suffering as a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting."

Not, indeed, that we are at any liberty to prefer one apostle above another. We may not divide the Church, saying, I am of Paul, I of Peter, I of Apollos; but we may acknowledge the instrument which God was pleased to use; we may admire the way in which the Holy Ghost fitted him for his work; we may, with the churches of Judea, "glorify God in Paul." Among the early fathers Augustine was singled out as the "Doctor of Grace;" so much did he delight in those doctrines that exhibit the freeness of divine favor. And surely we might affirm the like of Paul. Among his compeers he outstripped them all in declaring the grace that bringeth salvation. The sense of grace pervaded all his thoughts as the life blood circulates through all the veins of one's body. Does he speak of conversion, "he was called by grace." Nay, he sees grace going before his conversion, and "separating him from his mother's womb." He attributes all his ministry to grace. "To me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." See him at any time, and under any circumstances, whether bowed down with infirmity, or lifted to the third heavens with revelation, he has but one account to give of himself, "By the grace of God I am what I am."

There are no ministers who contend so fully and so unflinchingly for free, sovereign, unconditional grace, as those who before their conversion have revelled in gross and outrageous sin. It is a Bunyan who breathed curses, a Newton who was a very monster in sin; it is the like of these, who cannot forget for one

hour of their lives afterwards, the grace that snatched them from the pit, and plucked them as brands from the burning. Strange indeed that God should have it so. The providence is inscrutable that permits some of the Lord's chosen people to wander and rove as far as sheep can stray. Such men, however, make the most valiant champions for that grace which only can rescue any sinner from eternal woe.

This morning we propose to expound to you "*the riches of God's grace;*" this is the *Treasure;* then, secondly, we shall speak of the "*Forgiveness of Sins,*" which is to be judged of by that *Measure;* the forgiveness is *according to* the riches of his grace; and we shall afterwards close by considering some of the *privileges connected therewith.*

I. First, consider the RICHES OF HIS GRACE.

In attempting to search out that which is unsearchable, we must, I suppose, use some of those comparisons by which we are wont to estimate the wealth of the monarchs, and mighty ones of this world. It happened once that the Spanish ambassador, in the halcyon days of Spain, went on a visit to the French ambassador, and was invited by him to see the treasures of his master. With feelings of pride he showed the repositories, profusely stored with earth's most precious and most costly wealth. "Could you show us gems so rich," said he, "or aught the like of this for magnificence of possessions in all your sovereign's kingdom?" "Call your master rich?" replied the ambassador of Spain, "why, my master's treasures have no bottom"—alluding, of course, to the mines of Peru and Petrosa. So truly in the riches of grace there are mines too deep for man's finite understanding ever to fathom. However profound your investigation, there is still a deep couching beneath which baffles all research. Who can ever discover the attributes of God? Who can find out the Almighty to perfection? We are at a loss to estimate the very quality and properties of grace as it dwells in the mind of Deity. Love in the human breast is a passion. With God it is not so. Love is an attribute of the divine essence. God is love. In men, grace and bounty may grow into a habit, but grace with God is an intrinsic attribute

of his nature. He cannot but be gracious. As by necessity of his Godhead he is omnipotent, and omnipresent, so by absolute necessity of his divinity is he gracious.

Come then, my brethren, into this glittering mine of the attributes of God. Every one of God's attributes is infinite, and therefore this attribute of grace is without bounds. You cannot conceive the infinity of God, why, therefore, should I attempt to describe it. Recollect however, that as the attributes of God are of the like extent, the guage of one attribute must be the guage of another. Or, further, if one attribute is without limit, so is another attribute. Now, you cannot conceive any boundary to the omnipotence of God. What cannot he do? He can create, he can destroy; he can speak universes into existence; or he can quench the light of stars as readily as we tread out a spark. He hath but to will it, and creatures without number sing his praise; yet another volition, and those creatures subside into their naked nothingness, as a moment's foam subsides into the wave that bears it, and is lost forever. The astronomer turns his tube to the remotest space, he cannot find a boundary to God's creating power; but could he seem to find a limit, we would then inform him that all the worlds on worlds that cluster in space, thick as the drops of morning dew upon the meadows, are but the shreds of God's power. He can make more than all these, can dash those into nothingness, and can begin again. Now, as boundless as is his power, so infinite is his grace. As he hath power to do anything, so hath he grace enough to give anything—to give everything to the very chief of sinners.

Take another attribute if you please—God's omniscience, there is no boundary to that. We know that his eye is upon every individual of our race—he sees him as minutely as if he were the only creature that existed. It is boasted of the eagle that though he can outstare the sun, yet when at his greatest height, he can detect the movement of the smallest fish in the depths of the sea. But what is this compared with the omniscience of God? His eye tracks the sun in his marvellous course, his eye marks the winged comet as it flies through space, his eye discerns the utmost bound of creation inhabited or uninhabited. There is nothing hid from the light thereof; with him

there is no darkness at all. If I mount to heaven he is there; If I dive to hell he is there; if I fly mounted on the morning ray beyond the western sea,

> "His swifter hand shall first arrive,
> And there arrest the fugitive."

There is no limit to his understanding, nor is there to his grace. As his knowledge comprehendeth all things, so doth his grace comprehend all the sins, all the trials, all the infirmities of the people upon whom his heart is set. Now, my dear brethren, the next time we fear that God's grace will be exhausted, let us look into this mine, and then let us reflect that all that has ever been taken out of it has never diminished it a single particle. All the clouds that have been taken from the sea have never diminished its depth, and all the love, and all the mercy that God has given to all but infinite numbers of the race of man, has not diminished by a single grain the mountain of his grace.

But to proceed further: we sometimes judge of the wealth of men, not only by their real estate in mines and the like, but by what they have on hand stored up in the treasury. I must take you now, my brethren, to the glittering treasury of divine grace. Ye know its name; it is called the Covenant. Have you not heard the marvellous story of what was done in the olden time, before the world was made. God foreknew that man would fall, but he determined of his own infinite purpose and will that he would raise out of this fall a multitude which no man can number. The Eternal Father held a solemn council with the Son and Holy Spirit. Thus spoke the Father:—"I will that those whom I have chosen be saved!" Thus said the Son:—"My Father, I am ready to bleed and die, that thy justice may not suffer, and that thy purpose may be executed." "I will," said the Holy Spirit, "that those whom the Son redeems with blood shall be called by grace, shall be quickened, shall be preserved, shall be sanctified and perfected, and brought safely home." Then was the Covenant written, signed, and sealed, and ratified between the Sacred Three. The Father gave his Son, the Son gave himself, and the Spirit promises all his influence, all his

presence, to all the chosen. Then did the Father give to the Son the persons of his elect; then did the Son give himself to the elect, and take them into union with him; and then did the Spirit in covenant vow that these chosen ones should surely be brought safe home at last. Whenever I think of the old covenant, I am perfectly amazed and staggered with the grace of it. The very poetry of our holy religion lies in these ancient things of the everlasting hills—that glorious covenant, signed and sealed and ratified, in all things ordered well from old eternity.

Pause here, my hearer, awhile, and think before this world was made, ere God had settled the deep foundations of the mountains or poured the seas from his hand, he had chosen his people and set his heart on them. To them he had given himself, his Son, his heaven, his all. For them did Christ determine to resign his bliss, his home, his life; for them did the Spirit promise all his attributes, that they might be blessed. Oh, grace divine, how glorious thou art, without beginning, without end! How shall I praise thee? Take up the strain, ye angels; sing these noble themes, the love of the Father, the love of the Son, and the love of the Spirit.

This, my brethren, if ye think it over, may well make you estimate aright the riches of god's grace. If you read the roll of the covenant from beginning to end, containing as it does, election, redemption, calling, justification, pardon, adoption, immortality—if you read all this, you will say, "This is riches of grace—God, great and infinite! Who is a God like unto thee for the riches of thy love?

The riches of great kings, again, may often be estimated by the munificence of the monuments which they reared to record their feats. We have been amazed in these modern times at the marvellous riches of the kings of Nineveh and Babylon. Modern monarchs, with all their appliances, would fail to erect such monstrous piles of palaces as those in which old Nebuchadnezzar walked in times of yore. We turn to the pyramids: we see there what the wealth of nations can accomplish; we look across the sea to Mexico and Peru, and we see the relics of a semi-barbarous people, but we are staggered and amazed to think what mines of riches they must have possessed ere such works

could have been accomplished. Solomon's riches are perhaps best judged of by us when we think of those great cities which he built in the wilderness, Tadmor and Palmyra. When we go and visit those ruins and see the massive columns and magnificent sculpture, we say, Solomon indeed was rich. We feel, as we walk amid the ruins, somewhat like the queen of Sheba: even in Scripture the half has not been told us of the riches of Solomon.

My brethren, God has led us to inspect mightier trophies than Solomon, or Nebuchadnezzar, or Montezuma, or the Pharaohs. Turn your eyes yonder, see that blood-bought host arrayed in white, surrounding the throne—hark, how they sing, with voice triumphant, with melodies seraphic, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever." And who are these? Who are these trophies of his grace? Some of them have come from the stews of harlotry; many of them have come from the taverns of drunkenness. Nay, more, the hands of some of those so white and fair were once red with the blood of saints. I see yonder the men that nailed the Saviour to the tree—men who cursed God, and invoked on themselves death and damnation. I see there Manasseh, who shed innocent blood so much, and the thief who in the last moment looked to Christ, and said, "Lord, remember me." But I need not turn your gaze so far aloft: look, my brethren, around; you do not know your next neighbor by whom you are sitting this morning, it may be. But there are stories of grace that might be told by some here this morning, that would make the very angels sing more loudly than they have done before. Well, I know these cheeks have well nigh been scarlet with tears when I have heard the stories of free grace wrought in this congregation. Then are those known to me, but of course not so to you, who were among the vilest of men, the scum of society. We have here those to whom cursing was as their breath, and drunkenness had grown to be a habit; and yet here they are servants of God, and of his church; and it is their delight to testify to others what a Saviour they have found. Ah, but my hearer, perhaps thou art one of those trophies, and if so, the best proof of the riches of his grace is that which thou findest

in thy own soul. I think God to be gracious, when I see others saved. I know he is, because he has saved me—that wayward, wilful boy, who scoffed a mother's love, and would not be melted by all her prayers; who only wished to know a sin, in order to perpetrate it. Is he standing here to preach the gospel of the grace of God to you to-day? Yes. Then there is no sinner out of hell that has sinned too much for grace to save. That love which can reach to me, can reach to you. Now I know the riches of his grace, because I hope I prove it, and feel it in my own inmost heart, my dear hearer, and may you know it too, and then you will join with our poet, who says—

> "Then loudest of the crowd I'll sing,
> While heaven's resounding mansions ring
> With shouts of sovereign grace."

Go a little further now. We have thus looked at the wine and treasures, and at the monuments. But more. One thing which amazed the queen of Sheba, with regard to the riches of Solomon, was the sumptuousness of his table. Such multitudes sat down to it to eat and drink, and though they were many, yet they all had enough and to spare. She lost all heart when she saw the provisions of a single day brought in. I forget just now, although I meant to refer to the passage, how many fat beasts, how many bullocks of the pasture, how many bucks and fallow deer and game of all sorts, and how many measures of flour, and how many gallons of oil were brought to Solomon's table every day, but it was something marvellous; and the multitudes that had to feast were marvellous also, yet had they all enough. And now, think, my brethren, of the hospitalities of the God of grace each day. Ten thousand thousand of his people are this day sitting down to feast; hungry and thirsty they bring large appetites with them to the banquet, but not one of them returns unsatisfied; there is enough for each, enough for all, enough for evermore. Though the host that feed there is countless as the stars of heaven, yet I find that not one lacks his portion. He openeth his hand and supplies the want of every living saint upon the face of the earth. Think how much grace one saint requires, so much that nothing but the Infinite could supply him for one day.

We burn so much fuel each day to maintain the fire of love in our hearts, that we might drain the mines of all their wealth of coal. Surely, were it not that we have infinite treasures of grace, the daily consumption of a single saint might outdemand everything that is to be found upon the face of the earth. And yet it is not one but many saints, and many hundreds, not for one day, but for many years; not for many years only, but generation after generation, century after century, race after race of men, living on the fulness of God in Christ. Yet are none of them starved; they all drink to the full; they eat and are satisfied. What riches of grace, then, may we see in the sumptuousness of his hospitality.

Sometimes, my brethren, I have thought, if I might but get the broken meat at God's back door of grace, I should be satisfied; like the woman who said, "The dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from the master's table;" or like the prodigal, who said, "Make me as one of thy hired servants." But you will remember that no child of God is ever made to live on husks; God does not give the parings of his grace to the meanest of them, but they are all fed like Mephibosheth; they eat from the king's own table the daintiest dishes. And if one may speak for the rest, I think, in matters of grace we all have Benjamin's mess—we all have ten times as much as we could have expected, and though not more than our necessities, yet are we often amazed at the marvellous plenty of grace which God gives us in the covenant and the promise.

Now we turn to another point to illustrate the greatness of the riches of God's grace. A man's riches may often be judged of by the equipage of his children, the manner in which he dresses his servants and those of his household. It is not to be expected that the child of the poor man, though he is comfortably clothed, should be arrayed in like garments to those which are worn by the sons of princes. Let us see, then, what are the robes in which God's people are apparelled, and how they are attended. Here again I speak upon a subject where a large imagination is needed, and my own utterly fails me. God's children are wrapped about with a robe, a seamless robe, which earth and heaven could not buy the like of if it were once lost. For texture it

excels the fine linen of the merchants; for whiteness, it is purer than the driven snow; no looms on earth could make it, but Jesus spent his life to work my robe of righteousness. There was a drop of blood in every throw of the shuttle, and every thread was made of his own heart's agonies. 'Tis a robe that is divine, complete; a better one than Adam wore in the perfection of Eden. He had but a human righteousness though a perfect one, but we have a divinely perfect righteousness. Strangely, my soul, art thou arrayed, for thy Saviour's garment is on thee; the royal robe of David is wrapped about his Jonathan. Look at God's people as they are clothed too in the garments of sanctification. Was there ever such a robe as that? it is literally stiff with jewels. He arrays the meanest of his people every day as though it were a wedding day; he arrays them as a bride adorneth herself with jewels; he has given Ethiopia and Sheba for them, and he will have them dressed in gold of Ophir. What riches of grace then, must there be in God who thus clothes his children!

But to conclude this point upon which I have not as yet begun. If you would know the full riches of divine grace, read the Father's heart when he sent his Son upon earth to die; read the lines upon the Father's countenance when he pours his wrath upon his only begotten and his well-beloved Son. Read too the mysterious handwriting on the Saviour's flesh and soul, when on the cross quivering with agony, the waves of swelling grief do o'er his bosom roll. If ye would know love ye must repair to Christ, and ye shall see a man so full of pain, that his head, his hair, his garments bloody be. 'Twas love that made him sweat as it were great drops of blood. If ye would know love, you must see the Omnipotent mocked by his creatures, you must hear the Immaculate slandered by sinners, you must hear the Eternal One groaning out his life, and crying in the agonies of death, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" In fine, to sum up all in one, the riches of the grace of God are infinite, beyond all limit; they are inexhaustible, they can never be drained; they are all-sufficient, they are enough for every soul that ere shall come to take of them; there shall be enough for ever while earth endureth, until the last vessel of mercy shall be brought home safely.

II. Let me now dwell upon THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS. The *treasure* of God's grace is the *measure* of our forgiveness; this forgiveness of sins is according to the riches of his grace. We may infer, then, that the pardon which God gives to the penitent is no niggard pardon. Have not you asked a man's pardon sometimes, and he has said, "Yes, I forgive you," and you have thought, "Well, I would not even have asked for pardon if I thought you would have given it in such a surly style as that; I might as well have continued as I was, as to be so ungraciously forgiven." But when God forgives a man, though he be the chief of sinners, he puts out his hand and freely forgives; in fact, there is as much joy in the heart of God when he forgives, as there is in the heart of the sinner when he is forgiven; God is as blessed in giving as we are in receiving. It is his very nature to forgive; he must be gracious, he must be loving, and when he lets his heart of love out to free us from our sins, it is with no stinted stream; he doth it willingly, he upbraideth it not. Again: if pardon be in proportion to the riches of his grace, we may rest assured it is not a limited pardon, it is not the forgiving of some sins and the leaving of others upon the back. No, this were not Godlike, it were not consistent with the riches of his grace. When God forgives he draws the mark through every sin which the believer ever has committed, or ever will commit. That last point may stagger you, but I do believe with John Kent, that in the blood of Christ

> "There's pardon for transgressions past,
> It matters not how black their cast;
> And, oh! my soul, with wonder view,
> For sins to come there's pardon too."

However many, however heinous, your sins may have been, the moment you believe, they are every one of them blotted out. In the Book of God there is not a single sin against any man in this place whose trust is in Christ, not a single one, not even the shadow of one, not a spot, or the remnant of a sin remaining; all is gone. When Noah's flood covered the deepest mountains, you may rest assured it covered the mole-hills; and when God's love covers the big sins it covers the little ones, and they are all gone at once! When a bill is receipted fully there is not an

item which can be charged again, and when God pardons the sins of the believer there is not one single sin left; not even half-a-one can ever be brought to his remembrance again. Nay, more than this; when God forgives, he not only forgives all, but once for all. Some tell us that God forgives men and yet they are lost. A fine God yours! They believe that the penitent sinner finds mercy, but that if he slips or stumbles in a little while he will be taken out of the covenant of grace and will perish. Such a covenant I could not and would not believe in; I tread it beneath my feet as utterly despicable. The God whom I love when he forgives never punishes afterwards. By one sacrifice there is a full remission of all sin that ever was against a believer, or that ever will be against him. Though you should live till your hair is bleached thrice over, till Methuselah's thousand years should pass over your furrowed brow, not a single sin shall ever stand against you, nor shall you ever be punished for a single sin; for every sin is forgiven, fully forgiven, so that not even part of the punishment shall be executed against you.

"Well, but," saith one, "how is it that God does punish his children?" I answer, he does not. He chastises them as a father, but that is a different thing from the punishment of a judge. If the child of a judge were brought up to the bar, and that child were freely forgiven all that he had done amiss, if justice exonerated and acquitted him, it might nevertheless happen that there was evil in the heart of that child, which the father, out of love to the child, might have to whip out of him. But there is a great deal of difference between a rod in the hand of the executioner, and a rod in a father's hand. Let God smite me, if I sin against him, yet it is not because of the guilt of sin; there is no punishment in it whatever, the penal clause is done away with. It is only that he may cure me of my fault, that he may fetch the folly out of my heart. Do you chasten your children vindictively because you are angry with them? No; but because you love them; if you are what parents should be, the chastisement is a proof of your affection, and your heart smarts more than their body pains, when you have to chasten them for what they have done amiss. God is not angry against his children, nor is there a sin in them which he will punish. He

will whip it out of them, but punish them for it he will not. O, glorious grace! It is a gospel worth preaching.

> "The moment a sinner believes,
> And trusts in his crucified God
> His pardon at once he receives,
> Redemption in full through Christ's blood."

Having thus spoken of the pardon of sin as being fully commensurate with the grace of God, I will put this question to my hearer: My friend, are you a forgiven man? Are your sins all gone? "No," saith one, "I cannot say they are, but I am doing my best to reform." Ah! you may do your best to reform, I hope you will, but that will never wash out your past sins. All the waters of the rivers of reformation can never wash away a single blood-red stain of guilt. "But," saith one, "may I, just as I am, believe that my sins are forgiven?" No, but I tell thee what thou mayst do. If God help thee, thou mayst now cast thyself simply upon the blood and righteousness of Christ; and the moment thou dost that, thy sins are all gone, and gone so that they never can return again. "He that believeth on the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved." Nay, he is saved in the moment of his faith. He is no more in the sight of God received as a sinner; Christ has been punished for him. The righteousness of Christ is wrapped about him, and he stands accepted in the beloved. "Well, but," saith one, "I can believe that a man, after he has been a long time a Christian, may know his sins to be forgiven, but I cannot imagine that I can know it at once." The knowledge of our pardon does not always come the moment we believe, but the fact of our pardon is before our knowledge of it, and we may be pardoned before we know it. But if thou believest on the Lord Jesus Christ with all thine heart, I will tell thee this: if thy faith be free of all self-trust thou shalt know today that thy sins are forgiven, for the witness of the Spirit shall bear witness with thy heart, and thou shalt hear that secret, still small voice, saying, "Be of good cheer; thy sins, which are many, are all forgiven." "Oh," saith one, "I would give all I have for that." And you might give all you have, but you would not have it at that price. You might give the first-born

for your transgression, the fruit of your body for the sin of your soul; you might offer rivers of oil, and ten thousand of the fat of fed beasts; you would not have it for money, but you may have it for nothing; it is freely brought to you; you are bidden to take it. Only acknowledge your sin, and put your trust in Christ, and there is not one man among you who shall hear aught about his sin in the day of judgment. It shall be cast into the depth of the sea—it shall be carried away forever.

I will give you a picture, and then leave this subject. See, there stands the high priest of the Jews. A goat is brought to him—it is called the "scape-goat." He puts his hands upon the head of this goat, and begins to make confession of sin. Will you come and do the like? Jesus Christ is the scape-goat; come and lay our hand on his thorn-crowned head by faith, and make confession of your sin, as the high priest did of old. Have you done it? Is your sin confessed? Now believe that Jesus Christ is able and willing to take your sin away. Rest wholly and entirely on him. Now what happens? The high-priest takes the scape-goat, gives it into the hand of a trusty man, who leads it over hill and down dale, till he is many miles away, and then, suddenly loosing its bonds, he frightens it, and the goat flees with all its might. The man watches it until it is gone, and he can see it no more. He comes back, and he says—"I took the scape-goat away, and it vanished out of my sight; it is gone into the wilderness." Ah, my hearer, and if thou hast put thy sins on Christ by a full confession, remember he has taken them all away, as far as the east is from the west, they are gone, and gone eternally. Thy drunkenness, thy swearing is gone, thy lying, thy theft is gone, thy Sabbath-breaking, thy evil thoughts are gone—all gone, and thou shalt never see them again.

III. And now I conclude by noticing THE BLESSED PRIVILEGES WHICH ALWAYS FOLLOW THE FORGIVENESS WHICH IS GIVEN TO US ACCORDING TO THE GRACE OF GOD. I think there are a great many people who do not believe there is any reality in religion at all. They think it is a very respectable thing to go to church and to chapel, but as to ever enjoying a consciousness than their sins

are all forgiven, they never think about that. And I must confess that, in the religion of these modern times, there does not seem to be much reality. I do not hear at this day that clear, ringing, distinct proclamation of the gospel that I want to hear It is a grand thing to carry the gospel to all manner of men, to take it the theatre, and the like, but we want to have the gospel undiluted—the milk must have a little less water with it. There must be a more distinct, palpable truth taught to the people, a something that they can really lay hold of, a something that they can understand, even if they will not believe it. I trust no man will misunderstand me this morning in what I have said. There is such a thing as having all our sins forgiven now. There is such a thing as knowing it and enjoying it. Now I will show you what will be the happiness resulting to you, should you obtain this blessing.

In the first place, you will have peace of conscience. That heart of yours that throbs so fast when you are alone, will be quite still and quiet. You will be least alone when you are alone. That fear of yours which makes you quicken your step in the dark, because you are afraid of something, and you do not know what, will all be gone. I have heard of a man who was so constantly in debt, and continually being arrested by the bailiffs, that once upon a time, when going by some area railings, having caught his sleeve upon one of the rails, he turned round and said, "I don't owe you anything, sir." He thought it was a bailiff. And so it is with unforgiven sinners, wherever they are, they think they are going to be arrested. They can enjoy nothing. Even their mirth, what is it, but the color of joy, the crackling of thorns under the pot? there is no solid, steady fire. But when once a man is forgiven, he can walk anywhere. He says, "to me it is nothing whether I live or die, whether ocean depths engulf me, or whether I am buried beneath the avalanche; with sin forgiven, I am secure. Death has no sting to him. His conscience is at rest. Then he goes a step further. Knowing his sins to be forgiven, he has joy unspeakable. No man has such sparkling eyes as the true Christian; a man then knows his interest in Christ, and can read his title clear. He is a happy man, and must be happy. His troubles, what are they?

Less than nothing, and vanity; for all his sins are forgiven. So it is with the Christian, he can say in his cottage, when he sits down to his crust of bread, thank God I have no sin mixed in my cup—it is all forgiven. The bread may be dry, but it is not half so dry as it would be if I had to eat it with the bitter herbs of a guilty conscience, and with a terrible apprehension of the wrath of God. He has a joy that will stand all weathers, a joy that will keep in all climates, a joy that shines in the dark, and glitters in the night as well as in the day.

Then, to go further, such a man has access to God. Another man, with unforgiven sin about him, stands afar off; and if he thinks of God at all, it is as a consuming fire. But the forgiven Christian, looking up to God, when he sees the mountains and the hills, and rolling streams and the roaring flood, he says, "My father made them all;" and he clasps hands with the Almighty, across the infinite expanse that sunders man from his Maker. His heart flies up to God. He dwells near to him, and he feels that he can talk to God as a man talketh with this friend.

Then another effect of this is, that the believer fears no hell. There are solemn things in the Word of God, but they do not affright the believer. There may be a pit that is bottomless, but into that his foot shall never slide; it is true there is a fire that never shall be quenched, but it cannot burn him. That fire is for the sinner; but he has no sin imputed to him, it is all forgiven. The banded host of all the devils in hell cannot take him there, for he has not a single sin that can be laid to his charge. Daily sinning though he is, he feels those sins are all atoned for; he knows that Christ has been punished in his stead, and therefore Justice cannot touch him again.

Once more; the forgiven Christian is expecting heaven. He is waiting for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, for if death should intervene before that glorious advent, he knows that to him sudden death is sudden glory; and in the possession of a quiet conscience and of peace with God, he can go up to his chamber when the last solemn hour shall come; he can gather up his feet in his bed; he can bid farewell to his brethren and companions, to his wife and to his children, and can shut his eye in peace without a fear but that he shall open them in heaven.

Perhaps never does the joy of forgiven sin come out more brightly than it does on a dying bed. It has often been my privilege to test the power of religion when I have been sitting by the bedside of the dying. There is a young girl in heaven now, once a member of this church. I went with one of my beloved deacons to see her when she was very near her departure. She was in the last stage of consumption. Fair and sweetly beautiful she looked, and I think I never heard such syllables as those which fell from that girl's lips. She had had disappointments, and trials, and troubles, but all these she had not a word to say about, except that she blessed God for them; they had brought her nearer to the Saviour. And when we asked her whether she was not afraid of dying, "No," she said, "the only thing I fear is this, I am afraid of living, lest my patience should wear out. I have not said an impatient word yet, sir; I hope I shall not. It is sad to be so very weak, but I think if I had my choice, I would rather be here than be in health, for it is very precious to me; I know that my Redeemer liveth, and I am waiting for the moment when he shall send his chariot of fire to take me up to him." I put the question, "Have you not any doubts?" "No, none, sir; why should I? I clasp my arms around the neck of Christ." "And have not you any fear about your sins?" "No, sir, they are all forgiven; I trust the Saviour's precious blood." "And do you think that you will be as brave as this when you come actually to die?" "Not if he leaves me, sir, but he will never leave me, for he has said, 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.'" There is faith, dear brothers and sisters; may we all have it and receive forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace. AMEN.

SERMON V.

FAITH ILLUSTRATED.

[Few subjects command more the preacher's thought, or the hearer's attention, than *faith*. This discourse, delivered in Surrey Music Hall, August 21st, 1859, presents some aspects of this Christian Grace in a practical and impressive manner.]

"For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."—2 Timothy, i. 12.

An assurance of our safety in Christ will be found useful to us all in all states of experience. When Jesus sent forth his seventy chosen disciples, endowed with miraculous powers, they performed great wonders, and naturally enough were somewhat elated when they returned to tell him of their deeds. Jesus marked their tendency to pride; he saw that in the utterance—"Behold, even devils were subject to us," there was mingled much of self-congratulation and boasting. What cure, think you, did he administer? or what was the sacred lesson that he taught them which might prevent their being exalted above measure? "Nevertheless," said he, "rejoice not in this, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven." The assurance of our eternal interest in Christ may help to keep us humble in the day of our prosperity; for when God multiplies our wealth, when he blesses our endeavors, when he speeds the plough, when he wafts the good ship swiftly onward, he counterbalances all with the assurance that we have something better

than these things, and therefore we must not set our affections upon the things of earth, but upon things above, and let our heart be where our greatest treasure is. I say, better than any lancet to spill the superfluous blood of our boasting; better than any bitter medicine to chase the burning fever of our pride; better than any mixture of the most pungent ingredients is this most precious and hallowed wine of the covenant—a remembrance of *our safety in Christ.* This, this alone, opened up to us by the Spirit, will suffice to keep us in that happy lowliness, which is the true position of the full-grown man in Christ Jesus.

But note this, when at any time we are cast down with multiplied afflictions, and oppressed with sorrow, the very same fact which kept us humble in prosperity, will preserve us from despair in adversity. For mark you here, the apostle was surrounded by a great flight of affliction; he was compassed about with troubles; he suffered within and without; and yet he says, "Nevertheless, I am not ashamed." But what is that which preserves him from sinking? It is the same truth which kept the ancient disciples from overweening pride. It is the sweet persuasion of his interest in Christ. "For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." Get then, Christian brethren and friends, get *assurance;* be not content with hope, get confidence; rest not in faith, labor after the full assurance of faith; and never be content, my hearer, till thou canst say thou knowest thy election, thou art sure of thy redemption, and thou art certain of thy preservation unto *that day.*

I propose this morning in preaching upon this text to labor both for the edification of the saint, and the conversion of the sinner. I shall divide the text very simply thus: First, we have in it *the grandest action of the Christian's life,* namely, the committing of our eternal interests into the hand of Christ. Secondly, we have *the justification of this grand act of trust*—"I know in whom I have trusted." I have not trusted one whose character is unknown to me; I am not foolish; I have sure grounds for what I have done. And then we have, Thirdly, *the most blessed effect of this confidence*—"I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him."

I. THE GRANDEST ACTION OF THE CHRISTIAN'S LIFE.

With all our preaching, I am afraid that we too much omit the simple explanation of the essential act in salvation. I have feared that the anxious enquirer might visit many of our churches and chapels, month after month, and yet he would not get a clear idea of what he must do to be saved. He would come away with an indistinct notion that he was to believe; but *what* he was to believe he would not know. He would, perhaps, obtain some glimmering of the fact that he must be saved through the merits of Christ, but how those merits can become available to him, he would still be left to guess. I know at least that this was my case—that when sincere and anxious to do or be anything which might save my soul, I was utterly in the dark as to the way in which my salvation might be rendered thoroughly secure. Now, this morning, I hope I shall be able to put it in such a light that he who runs may read, and that the wayfaring man, though a fool, may not err therein.

The apostle says, he committed himself into the hands of Christ. His soul with all its eternal interests; his soul with all its sins, with all its hopes, and all its fears, he had put into the hands of Christ, as the grandest and most precious deposit which man could ever make. He had taken himself just as he was, and had surrendered himself to Christ, saying—"Lord save me, for I cannot save myself; I give myself up to thee, freely relying upon thy power, and believing in thy love. I give my soul up to thee to be washed, cleansed, saved and preserved, and at last brought home to heaven." This act of committing himself to Christ was the first act which ever brought real comfort to his spirit; it was the act which he must continue to perform whenever he would escape from a painful sense of sin; the act with which he must enter heaven itself, if he would die in peace and see God's face with acceptance. He must still continue to commit himself into the keeping of Christ.

I take it that when the apostle committed himself to Christ, he meant these three things. He meant first, that from that good hour *he renounced all dependence upon his own efforts to save himself.* The apostle had done very much, after a fashion, towards his own salvation. He commenced with all the advan-

tages of ancestry. He was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, of the tribe of Benjamin, as touching the law a Pharisee. He was one of the very straightest of the straightest sect of his religion. So anxious was he to obtain salvation by his own efforts, that he left no stone unturned. Whatever Pharisee might be a hypocrite, Paul was none. Though he tithed his anise, and his mint, and his cummin, he did not neglect the weightier matters of the law. He might have united with truth, in the affirmation of the young man, "All these things have I kept from my youth up." Hear ye his own testimony: "Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more." Being exceedingly desirous to serve God, he sought to put down what he thought was the pestilent heresy of Christ. Being exceeding hot in his endeavors against every thing that he thought to be wrong, he persecuted the professors of the new religion, hunted them in every city, brought them into the synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and when he had emptied his own country, he must needs take a journey to another, that he might there show his zeal in the cause of his God, by bringing out those whom he thought to be the deluded followers of an imposter. But suddenly Paul's mind is changed. Almighty grace leads him to see that he is working in a wrong direction, that his toil is lost, that as well might Sisyphus seek to roll his stone up hill, as for him to find a road to heaven up the steeps of Sinai; that as well might the daughters of Danus hope to fill the bottomless cauldron with a bucket full of holes, as Paul indulge the idea that he could fill up the measure of the laws' demands. Consequently he feels that all he has done is nothing worth, and coming to Christ he cries, "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."

And now, my dear friends, if you would be saved, this is what

you must do. I hope many of you have already performed the solemn act; you have said to Jesus in the privacy of your closet, "O Lord, I have tried to save myself, but I renounce all my endeavors. Once I said, 'I am no worse than my neighbors; my goodness shall preserve me. Once I said, 'I have been baptized, I have taken the sacrament, in these things will I trust,' and now, Lord, I cast all this false confidence to the winds.

> "'The best obedience of my hands
> Dares not appear before thy throne
> But faith can answer thy demands,
> By pleading what my Lord has done.'"

You cannot be saved, if you have one hand on self and the other hand on Christ. Let go, sinner; renounce all dependence in anything thou canst do. Cease to be thine own keeper, give up the futile attempt to be thy own Saviour, and then thou wilt have taken the first step to heaven. There are but two—the first is, out of self; the next is, into Christ. When Christ is thy all, then art thou safe.

But again, when the apostle says he committed his soul to the keeping of Christ, he means that he had *implicit confidence that Christ would save him*, now that he had relinquished all trust in self. Some men have gone far enough to feel that the best performance of their hands cannot be accepted before the bar of God. They have learned that their most holy acts are full of sin, that their most faithful service falls short of the demands of the law; they have relinquished self, but they are not able yet to see that Christ can and will save them. They are waiting for some great revelation; they think, perhaps, that by some marvellous electric shock, or some miraculous feeling within them, they will be led to place their confidence in Christ. They want to see an angel or a vision, or to hear a voice. Their cry is, "How could I think that Jesus would save such an one as I am? I am too vile, or else I am too hardened; it is not likely that Christ would ever save me." Now, I doubt not that the apostle had felt all this, but he overcame all this attacking of sin, and came to Christ at last, and said, "Jesus, I feel that thou art worthy of my confidence. Behold, I the chief of sinners am, I have

nothing in myself that can assist thee in taking me to heaven; I shall kick and struggle against thee rather than assist thee. But behold, I feel that such is thy power, and such thy love, that I commit myself to thee. Take me as I am, and make me what thou wouldst have me be. I am vile, but thou art worthy; I am lost, but thou art the Saviour; I am dead, but thou art the quickener; take me, I beseech thee; I put my trust in thee, and though I perish, I will perish, relying on thy blood. If I must die, I will die with my arms about thy cross, for thou art worthy of confidence, and on thee do I rely."

And now, my friends, if you will be safe, you must, in the strength of the Holy Ghost, do this also. You say you have given up all trust in self—well and good; now place your trust in Christ, repose your all on him; drop into his arms; cast yourself into his power; lay hold on him. You know how Joab, when he fled from the sword of Solomon, laid hold on the horns of the altar, thinking that surely when he had laid hold on the altar he was safe. His was vain confidence, for he was dragged from the horns of the altar and slain. But if thou canst lay hold on the horns of the altar of God, even Christ, thou art most surely safe, and no sword of vengeance can ever reach thee.

I saw the other day a remarkable picture, which I shall use as an illustration of the way of salvation by faith in Jesus. An offender had committed a crime for which he must die, but it was in the olden time when churches were considered to be sanctuaries in which criminals might hide themselves and so escape. See the transgressor—he rushes towards the church, the guards pursue him with their drawn swords, all athirst for his blood; they pursue him even to the church door. He rushes up the steps, and just as they are about to overtake him and hew him in pieces on the threshold of the church, out comes the bishop, and holding up the crucifix, he cries, "Back, back! stain not the precincts of God's house with blood! stand back!" and the guards at once respect the emblem and stand back, while the poor fugitive hides himself behind the robes of the priest. It is even so with Christ. The guilty sinner flies to the cross—flies straight away to Jesus, and though Justice pursues him, Christ lifts up his wounded hands and cries to Justice, "Stand

back! stand back! I shelter this sinner; in the secret place of my tabernacle do I hide him; I will not suffer him to perish, for he puts his trust in me."

Sinner, fly to Christ! But thou sayest, "I am too vile." The viler thou art, the more wilt thou honor him by believing that he is able to make thee clean. "But I am too great a sinner." Then the more honor shall be given to him that thou art able to confide in him, great sinner though thou art. If you have a little sickness, and you tell your physician—"Sir! I am quite confident in your skill to heal," there is no great compliment; but if you are sore sick with a complication of diseases, and you say—"Sir! I seek no better skill, I will ask no more excellent advice, I trust alone in you," what an honor have you conferred on him, that you could trust your life in his hands when it was in extreme danger. Do the like with Christ; put your soul in his care, dare it, venture it; cast thyself simply on him; let nothing but faith be in thy soul; believe him, and thou shalt never be mistaken in thy trust.

But I think I have not completely stated all the apostle meant, when he said that he committed himself to Christ. He certainly meant those two things—self-renunciation, and implicit belief in Christ's power and willingness to save; but in the third place, the apostle meant that he did make *a full and free surrender of himself to Christ*, to be Christ's property, and Christ's servant for ever. If you would be saved, you must not be your own. Salvation is through being bought with a price; and if you be bought with a price, and thus saved, remember, from that day forward you will not be your own. To-day, as an ungodly sinner, you are your own master, free to follow the lusts of the flesh; or, rather Satan is your great tyrant, and you are under bondage to him. If you would be saved, you must by the aid of the Holy Spirit now renounce the bondage of Satan and come to Christ, saying, "Lord, I am willing to give up all sin, it is not in my power to be perfect, but I wish it were; make me perfect. There is not a sin I wish to keep; take all away; I present myself before thee. Wash me, make me clean. Do what thou wilt in me. I make no reserve, I make a full surrender of all to thee. And then you must give up to Christ all you

are, and all you have by solemn indenture, signed and sealed by your own heart. You must say, in the words of the sweet Moravian hymn—

> "Take thou my soul and all my powers;
> O take my memory, mind, and will,
> Take all my goods, and all my hours,
> Take all I know, and all I feel;
> Take all I think, and speak, and do;
> O take my heart, but make it new."

Accept the sacrifice—I am worthless, but receive me through thy own merits. Take and keep me, I am, I hope I ever shall be thine.

I have now explained that act which is after all the only one which marks the day of salvation to the soul. I will give one or two figures, however, to set it in a clearer light. When a man hath gold and silver in his house, he fears lest some thief may break through and steal, and therefore, if he is a wise man, he seeks out a bank in which to store his money. He makes a deposit of his gold and his silver; he says, in effect, "Take that, sir; keep it for me. To-night I shall sleep securely, I shall have no thought of thieves; my treasure is in your hands. Take care of that for me, when I need it, at your hands shall I require it." Now, in faith, we do just the same with our blessed Redeemer. We bring our soul just as it is and give it up to him. "Lord, I cannot keep it; sin and Satan will be sure to ruin it—take it and keep it for me, and in that day when God shall require the treasure, stand my sponsor, and on my behalf return my soul to my Maker, kept and preserved to the end." Or take another figure. When your adventurous spirit hath sought to climb some lofty mountain, delighted with the prospecty ou scale many and many a steep; onward you climb up the rocky crags until at last you arrive at the verge of the snow and ice. There in the midst of precipices that scarcely know a bottom, and of summits that seem inaccessible, you are suddenly surrounded with a fog. Perhaps it becomes worse and worse, until a snow storm completes your bewilderment. You cannot see a step before you; your track is lost. A guide appears: "I know this mountain," says he. "In my early days, have I climbed it with my

father. O'er each of these crags have I leaped in pursuit of the chamois; I know every chasm and cavern. If you will follow me, even through the darkness, I will find the path and bring you down; but mark, before I undertake to guide you in safety, I demand of you implicit trust. You must not plant your feet where *you* think it safest, but where I shall bid you. Wherever I bid you climb or descend you must implicitly obey, and I undertake on my part to bring you safely down to your house again." You do so—you have many temptations to prefer your own judgment to his, but you resist them—and you are safe. Even so must you do with Christ. Lost to-day, and utterly bewildered, Christ appears. "Let me guide you, let me be an eye to thee through the thick darkness; let me be thy foot, lean on me in the slippery place, let me be thy very life; let me wrap thee in my crimson vest to keep thee from the tempest and the storm." Will you now trust him; rely entirely, simply, and implicitly upon him? If so, the grand act of your life is done, and you are a saved man, and on the eternal shore you shall one day plant your delighted feet, and praise the name of him who saved you from your sins.

I must add, however, that this act of faith must not be performed only once, but it must be continued as long as you live. As long as you live you must have no other confidence but "Jesus only." You must take him, to have and to hold through life and in death, in tempest and in sunshine, in poverty and in wealth, never to part or sunder from him. You must take him to be your only prop, your only pillar from this day forth and forever. What sayest thou, sinner? Does God the Holy Ghost lead thee to say "Ay?" Does thy heart now confide in Jesus? If so, let the angels sing, for a soul is born to God, and a brand is plucked from the eternal fire. I have thus described faith in Christ—the committing of the soul to him. This brings us to our second point.

II. The Justification of this grand act of Trust.

Confidence is sometimes folly; trusting in man is always so. When I exhort you, then, to put your entire confidence in Christ, am I justified in so doing? and when the apostle could say that

he trusted alone in Jesus, and had committed himself to him, was he a wise man or a fool? What saith the apostle? "I am no fool," said he, "for I *know* whom I have believed. I have not trusted to an unknown and untried pretender. I have not relied upon one whose character I could suspect. I have confidence in one whose power, whose willingness, whose love, whose truthfulness I know. I know whom I have believed." When silly women put their trust in yet more silly and wicked priests they may say possibly that they know whom they have believed. But we may tell them that their knowledge must be ignorance indeed—that they are greatly deluded in imagining that any man, be he who he may, or what he may, can have any power for the salvation of his fellow's soul. You come and ask me to repose my soul in you; and who are you? "I am an ordained priest of the Church of Rome." And who ordained you? "I was ordained by such a one." And who ordained him? "It cometh after all," saith he, "from the Pope." And who is he, and what is he more than any other man, or any other impostor? What ordination can *he* confer? "He obtained it directly from Peter." Did he? Let the link be proved; and if he did, what was Peter, and where has God given Peter power to forgive sin—a power which he should transmit to all generations? Begone! The thick pollutions of thine abominable church forbid the idea of descent from any apostle but the traitor Judas. Upon the Papal throne men worse than devils have had their seat, and even a woman, big with her adulteries, once reigned as head of thine accursed church. Go purge the filthiness of thy priesthood, the debauchery of thy nunneries, and the Stygian filth of thy mother city, the old harlot Rome. Talk not of pardoning others, while fornication is licensed in Rome itself, and her ministers are steeped to the throat in iniquity. But to return.

I rest no more on Peter than Peter could rest in himself; Peter must rest on Christ, as a poor guilty sinner himself, an imperfect man who denied his Master with oaths and curses. He must rest where I must rest, and we must stand together on the same great rock on which Christ doth build his church, even his blood and his everlasting merits. I marvel that any should be

found to have such confidence in men, that they should put their souls in their hands. If, however, any of you wish to trust in a priest, let me advise you, if you do trust him, to do it wholly and fully. Trust him with your cash-box, trust him with your gold and silver. Perhaps you object to that. You don't feel at all inclined to go that length. But, my friend, if you cannot trust the man with your gold and silver, pray don't trust him with your soul. I suggested this because I thought you might smile and at once detect your error. If you could not trust such a fox with your business; if you would as soon commit your flocks to the custody of a wolf, why will you be fool enough to lay your soul at the feet of some base priest, who, likely enough, is ten thousand times more wicked than yourself?

Was Paul then justified in his confidence in Christ? He says he was, because he *knew* Christ. And what did he know? Paul knew, first of all, Christ's God-head. Jesus Christ is the Son of God, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father. If my soul be in his hand,

> "Where is the power can reach it there,
> Or what can pluck it thence?"

If the wings of Omnipotence do cover it, if the eye of Omnipotence is fixed upon it, and if the heart of eternal love doth cherish it, how can it be destroyed? Trust not thy soul, my fellow-man, anywhere but with thy God. But Jesus is thy God, rely thou fully in him, and think not that thou canst place a confidence too great in him who made the heavens, and bears the world upon his shoulders. Paul knew too that Christ was the Redeemer. Paul had seen in vision Christ in the garden. He had beheld him sweat, as it were, great drops of blood. By faith, Paul had seen Jesus hanging on the cross. He had marked his agonies on the tree of doom. He had listened to his death shriek, of "It is finished!" and he felt that the atonement which Jesus offered was more than enough to recompense for the sin of man. Paul might have said, "I am not foolish in confiding my soul in the pierced and blood-stained hand of him whose sacrifice hath satisfied the Father, and opened the gates of heaven to all believers." Further, Paul knew that Christ was risen

from the dead. By faith he saw Christ at the right hand of God, pleading with his Father for all those who commit themselves to his hand. Paul knew Christ to be the all-prevailing intercessor. He said to himself, "I am not wrong in believing him, for I know whom I have trusted, that when he pleads, the Father will not deny him, and when he asks, sooner might he even die than he become deaf to Jesus' prayer." This was another reason why Paul dared to trust in Christ. He knew his Godhead, he knew his redemption, he knew his resurrection, he knew his ascension, and intercession, and I may add, Paul knew the love of Christ, that love which passeth kindness; higher than thought, and deeper than conception. He knew Christ's power, that he was Omnipotent, the King of kings. He knew Christ's faithfulness; that he was the God, and could not lie. He knew his immutability, that he was "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever;" and having known Christ in every glorious office, in every divine attribute, and in all the beauty of his complex character, Paul said, "I can with confidence repose in him, for I know him; I have trusted, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him."

But Paul not only knew these things by faith, but he knew much of them by experience. Our knowledge of Christ is somewhat like climbing one of our Welsh mountains. When you are at the base you see but little; the mountain itself appears to be but one half as high as it really is. Confined in a little valley, you discover scarcely anything but the rippling brooks as they descend into the stream at the base. Climb the first rising knoll, and the valley lengthens and widens beneath your feet. Go up higher, and higher still, till you stand upon the summit of one of the great roots that start out as spurs from the sides of the mountain, you see the country for some four or five miles round, and you are delighted with the widening prospect. But go onward, and onward, and onward, and how the scene enlarges, till at last, when you are on the summit, and look east, west, north, and south, you see almost all England lying before you. Yonder is a forest in some distant county, perhaps two hundred miles away, and yonder the sea, and there a shining river and the smoking chimnies of a manufacturing town, or there the

masts of the ships in some well known port. All these things please and delight you, and you say, "I could not have imagined that so much could be seen at this elevation." Now, the Christian life is of the same order. When we first believe in Christ, we see but little of him. The higher we climb, the more we discover of his excellencies and his beauties. But who has ever gained the summit? Who has ever known all the fulness of the heights, and depths, and lengths and breadths of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge? Paul now grows old, sitting, grey-haired, shivering in a dungeon in Rome—he could say, with greater power than we can, "I *know* whom I have believed!"—for each experience had been like the climbing of a hill, each trial had been like the ascending to another summit, and his death seemed like the gaining of the very top of the mountain from which he could see the whole of the faithfulness and the love of him to whom he had committed his soul. And now comes the conclusion.

III. The Apostle's Confidence.

The apostle said, "I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him." See this man. He is sure he shall be saved. But why? Paul! art thou sure that thou canst keep thyself? "No," says he, "I have nothing to do with that:" and yet thou art sure of thy salvation! "Yes," saith he, "I am!" How is it, then? "Why, I am persuaded that *he* is able to keep me. Christ, to whom I commit myself, I know hath power enough to hold me to the end." Martin Luther was bold enough to exclaim, "Let him that died for my soul, see to the salvation of it." Let us catechise the apostle for a few minutes, and see if we cannot shake his confidence. Paul! thou hast had many trials, and thou wilt have many more. What if thou shouldst be subject to the pangs of hunger, combined with those of thirst. If not a mouthful of bread should pass thy mouth to nourish thy body, or a drop of water should comfort thee, will not thy faith fail thee then? If provisions be offered thee, on condition of the denial of thy faith, dost thou not imagine that thou wilt be vanquished, and that the pangs of nature will overpower thee? "No," says Paul, "famine shall not

quench my faith; for the keeping of my faith is in the hands of Christ." But what if, combined with this, the whole world should rise against thee, and scoff thee? What if hunger within should echo to the shout of scorn without? wouldst thou not then deny thy faith? If, like Demas, every other Christian should turn to the silver of this world, and deny the Master, wouldst not thou go with them? "No," saith the apostle, "my soul is not in my keeping, else might it soon apostatize; it is in the hand of Christ; though all men should leave me, yet will he keep me."

But what, O apostle, if thou shouldst be chained to the stake, and the flames should kindle, and thy flesh should begin to burn; when thy beard is singed, and thy cheeks are black, wilt thou then hold him fast? "Yea," saith the apostle, "he will then hold me fast;" and I think I hear him, as he stops us in the midst of our catechising, and replies, "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Paul, Paul, suppose the world should tempt you in another way. If a kingdom were offered you—if the pomps and pleasures of this world should be laid at your feet, provided you would deny your Master, would your faith maintain its hold then? "Yea," saith the apostle, "Jesus would even then uphold my faith, for my soul is not in my keeping, but in his, and empires upon empires could not tempt him to renounce that soul of which he has become the guardian and the keeper. Temptation might soon overcome me, but it could not overcome *him*. The world's blandishments might soon move *me* to renounce my own soul; but they could not for one moment move *Jesus* to give me up." And so the apostle continues his confidence.

But Paul, when thou shalt come to die, will thou not then fear and tremble? "Nay," saith he, "he will be with me there, for my soul shall not die; that will be still in the hand of him who is immortality and life." But what will become of thee

when thy soul is separated from thy body? Canst thou trust him in a separate state, in the unknown world which visions cannot paint? In the time of God's mighty thunder, when earth shall shake and heaven shall reel, canst thou trust him then? "Yea," saith the apostle, "until *that day* when all these tempests shall die away into eternal calm, and when the moving earth shall settle into a stable land, in which there shall be no more sea, even then can I trust him.

"I know that safe with him remains,
Protected by his power,
What I've committed to his hands,
Till the decisive hour."

O poor sinner! come and put thy soul into the hands of Jesus. Attempt not to take care of it thyself; and then thy life shall be hidden in heaven, and kept there by the almighty power of God, where none can destroy it, and none can rob thee of it. "Whosoever believeth on the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved." AMEN.

SERMON VI.

A HOME QUESTION.

[The Home question is one of the most pungent and practical of these discourses. The treatment of the subject, its divisions and propositions, are characteristic, savoring less of the schools, than of that plain, good sense, which comprehends the best method of reaching heart and conscience with important and much needed truth. It was delivered in Exeter Hall, January 15th, 1860, and must have produced no little heart-searching among the many hundreds who listened to it.]

"But are there not with you, even with you, sins against the Lord your God?"—2 Chron., xxviii. 10.

This was a home stroke. When the children of Israel had bloodthirsty thoughts towards their brethren of Judah, the prophet very earnestly dissuaded them. "Why deal ye so sternly with your brethren who are in your power, simply because they have sinned. Smite them not too furiously, for are there not with you, even with you, sins against the Lord your God?" How remarkably pertinent is such a question to different nations, to different sects, to different classes among men. We are too apt to look upon the sins of other nations and forget our own. Let us be content to sweep our own streets, to cleanse our own cities, and make our own streams pure. Let our reformation begin at home, for we cannot hope that our remonstrances against the sin of others can be powerful, unless we have cleansed ourselves. How applicable, too, is this question

to the different sects, especially among Christians. How apt we all are to be plucking the mote from the eye of others. I hold that every Christian man is bound to give his honest testimony to every truth he believes. We must not shun to declare the whole counsel of God, because we may be charged with sectarianism. Every great man has been called a Sectarian in his time, and every true man who stands up for the whole that God teaches, will necessarily incur that censure. But let every Christian remember that our business is to deal first with ourselves. Let each denomination acknowledge its own faults, and confess its own iniquities. I am not ashamed of the denomination to which I belong, sprung, as we are, direct from the loins of Christ, having never passed through the turbid stream of Romanism, and having an origin apart from all dissent or Protestantism, because we have existed before all other sects; but I am equally clear as to our innumerable faults. Indeed, the sins and faults of our denomination may well go up against us to heaven, and withhold the dew of God's grace, that we prosper not. I believe it to be the same with every other class of Christians, and I would that whenever we are prone to rebuke our fellows too severely, we would pause and ask ourselves this question: "Are there not with us, even with us, sins against the Lord our God?"

The like question may be continually reiterated in the ears of the different classes into which our commonwealth is divided. You see continually on the walls—"Sermons to the Working Classes." The working classes might return the compliment by papering the walls with "Sermons to the Wealthy Classes," for if there be any that need preaching to, it is the rich. If there be any men, or any class of men, among whom the gospel has its stronghold, it is just that order and class of persons who may be fairly ranked among the working classes. I do not believe in the intense need of the working classes for evangelization any more than any other class among men. All class preaching is, I take it, fundamentally wrong. We preach the gospel to every creature, and the Christian minister knows nothing of rich or poor, of young man or old man. The gospel is to be preached every day to every body. No doubt the intent

is good, but I think the shape which it takes is calculated to raise up party prejudices, and to arouse class feelings. We stand up, and we say to all the classes, "Are there not with you, even with you, sins against the Lord your God?" What if the poor man has his tavern and his house of drunkenness—what are the drinking parties of the rich? What! is there no covered and concealed drunkenness hidden under the shadows of night? What if the poor have a place where they meet for licentiousness! Is there no such licentiousness among the aristocracy? Ah, my brethren, it is not for the Christian minister to set one rank of men against another. We are alike guilty, from the highest to the lowest. We have sins to confess and acknowledge, and the prophet of God must go through streets of this modern Nineveh, and he must demand that king as well as commoner should repent. We have the same gospel for all. "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "Are there not with you, even with you, sins against the Lord our God?"

But if the question be pertinent to nations, to sects, to classes, depend upon it, it is equally so to individuals. It is the nature of truth, like the crystal, that subdivide it as you may, every minute atom of it shall assume the same shape. Break up the truth from nations to sects, or from nations to classes, and it still holds true; subdivide it, dash it into atoms of individuality, and the same question is pertinent to each. "Are there not with you, even with you, sins against the Lord your God?"

I propose this morning, God helping me, to preach a very plain, faithful, and honest sermon; praying that it may come home to some of your hearts. You will find no smoothness about my speech, but the very reverse. My sword may have a very mean hilt, but I trust it shall have a very keen edge, and that it shall cut sharp, piercing to the dividing asunder of the joints and marrow. I shall first of all, put *a home question;* secondly, I shall make *a common sense enquiry;* and ere I have done, I shall give you *a little good advice.*

I. A HOME QUESTION.

Let me single out the persons and put the questions to them: 1. Doubtless I have here this morning, the *moralist*, the man who hates the very name of drunkenness. As for profanity, if he saw the seat of the scorner, he would pass by it at the remotest distance possible. He is a man whose hands are clean of all dishonesty. As far as he knows himself, he can say that he is upright in his business, that he is kind to his neighbors, that in everything he endeavors to keep the moral law. My friend has no religion perhaps, but still he has the outward form of morality. Bring anywhere between the wind and his nobility falsehood and fraud, and oh, how disgusted he is! Let him but see one evening the drunkard rolling in the streets, and no language can be too severe. As for the thief, he condemns him, and condemns him rightly too. But one part of his condemnation arises from the fact that he feels himself without any guilt or accusation in this matter. He is innocent, and therefore he feels that he may throw the first stone. My dear friend, I am glad to see you here this morning. I wish that all men were as moral as you are. I wish that all hated sin as much as you do; but still I have a question to ask of you, which perhaps you may not like, for you good moral people are very fond of your own righteousness. Let me ask you the question, "Is there not with you, even with you, some sin against the Lord your God?" Can you not remember any overt deed of wrong? Do you dare to tell me that you have never, never once broken a command of God? Well, let it stand so; but have you never said an idle *word*, and have you never read that for every idle word a man shall speak, the Lord shall bring him into judgment? Has your tongue always been as clean of every evil thing as God's law requires it should be? What! have you the matchless effrontery to say that? Do you think so well of yourself that you will declare nothing has ever come out of your mouth but that which is good?

Come then a little deeper, how about your thoughts? Remember, the thought of evil is sin. Have you never thought an evil thought, never desired an evil thing? Oh, man, I will not compliment you thus; take down the ten commandments, read

through the twentieth chapter of Exodus, prayerfully, and I think you will be compelled to say as you read each commandment, "Lord have mercy upon me, for though I thought my life was good, I now discover that with me, even with me, there is sin against God." I do not condemn you for finding fault with the drunkard or the harlot, but I condemn you for this, that unless you are without fault yourself, you ought not to take up the first stone. You, too, live in a glass house, why throw stones at others? I wish you would turn your attention to yourself. Physician, heal thyself; builder, build thine own wall; husbandman, plow thine own field and trim thine own vines. What signifieth it to thee if other men are worse than thyself, will that save thee? Look to thyself, I pray thee, or else thy morality shall be but the white winding sheet of thy dead soul. For men may be as truly damned in morality as in immorality. Morality is good enough for what it is, but for the salvation of souls it is not sufficient. There must be a living faith in a dying Saviour, there must be the Spirit of God indwelling in the soul, or else you can never mount to heaven. Oh, remember, one sin will sink your soul lower than the lowest hell. Repent therefore, O moralist, and no longer rebuke others, but rebuke thyself,

2. I now turn to another individual, a very common personage, *the accuser* of the brethren. I fear I have not a few here of that sort. I know I have some, but I fear they may be more than I think. Do you not know the man, who, whenever he can say a vile thing of a Christian will do it; who, whatever a Christian man may do will make mischief of it, who is inclined at all times to be turning that which is good into evil—a man described by Spenser in his picture of Envy in the "Faerie Queen?" Envy, who always did chaw between his dripping lips a toad, but "inwardly he chawed his own maw," eating his own heart, spitting on every one's good thing, imagining that every creature was as evil and as loathsome as himself. I have seen the dirty mangy wretch, himself abominable as sin, daring to insinuate that all others were as deceitful, vile and filthy as himself. This is when the evil has come to its full-grown state. Such persons then become the most loathsome creatures in all society, and the most despicable. Who is there that respects the wretch who has no

respect for others? whose only life is to pull other men's characters to pieces, and whose death would be sure to follow the universal reign of truth and goodness? I have seen, however, this disease before it has broken out and assumed its basest shape. I have seen men, and women too—let me lay a stress on that second word, for there is a stress sometimes needed there, though I would not be too severe—men *and women* who seem to have a propensity rather to observe that which is evil in another than that which is good. Now, I will put this home question. My friend, it is all very well for you to have those eyes so sharp, and to wear those magnifying glasses for other people, but "are there not with you, even with you, sins against the Lord your God?" What about your own life? I will tell you something about it. Whatever you think of other people is true of yourself—that is an invariable rule. We always measure other people's corn with our own bushel, and if you think you find other people's corn very gritty, the dirt was originally in your own. Depend upon it, that your judgment of others will be God's judgment of you, for with what measure ye mete the same shall be measured to you again.

Now, what good have you ever got in your life by finding fault with other people? I will tell you all the good you have got. You have often been found fault with by others, you have been hated, you have been distrusted, you have lost many loves you might have received, you have sundered yourself from kind associations, and if you continue in your present course, you will be like the dreary iceberg that floats in the sea, always to be dreaded and avoided, chilling the atmosphere for miles around, and threatening destruction to the unwary mariner who happens to come into its neighborhood. Nay, more, if your calumnies have been directed against a servant of God, you have brought upon your head the most awful doom that can ever fall on man. "He that toucheth my people toucheth the apple of mine eye," saith God. You have thrust your finger into the eye of God, and what shall be the doom which you shall receive? Tremble, sinner, there is nothing that brings a man's wrath into his face like finding fault with his children. He will stand many an insult, but once touch his children and his spirit boils with indig-

nation. And so, touch the children of God, find fault with them, and verily, verily, I say unto you, it were better for you that a millstone were about your neck, and that you were cast into the depths of the sea, "Are there not with you, even with you, sins against the Lord your God?" I am afraid none will take this second passage home, and the person who applies it to himself will be very angry. My dear friend, excuse me for saying that is a matter which I shall not at all regret, for if you will but be angry with yourself, you may be as angry as you please with me.

3. And now for the third class. I have here the man who says, "Well, I have not been touched in either of those things. I hope I am something more than moral. I am *religious* also. You never see me absent from my place of worship. I am as punctual as a chronometer whenever the doors are open. I add to my morality that which is better still. I attend to ceremonies; there is not one which I have not observed. I have endeavored as far as I can to carry out every precept of the Christian ritual. I feel indignant with men who break the Sabbath; I feel angry with those who have no reverent regard for God's house." My dear friend, I do not condemn you for those feelings; but permit me to put to you a question. "*Are there not with you, even with you, sins against the Lord your God?*" The preacher stands here this morning to make a personal confession. It not unfrequently happens that in condemning others he condemns himself; and while that is a painful thing to him as a man, it is always a hopeful sign to him as a minister, because surely that which compels contrition and repentance in your pastor, may possibly be profitable to you, to bring you also to repentance. There are, however, some outwardly religious people, who, when this question is put to them, imagine that certainly they have no sins whatever.

Ah, my dear hearers, "if ye say that ye have no sin, ye deceive yourselves, and the truth is not in you." But if you answer this question sorrowfully, saying, "Alas, alas, I am not what I would be; I pray God to sanctify me wholly, spirit, soul, and body," then I think there is a sign of life within. But if on the contrary, you reply, "No, I have no sin, I am perfect, I am

complete through my ceremonial righteousness;" ah, my dear hearer, you know not what spirit you are of. Though you have attended to the outward form, what is that unless you have received the spiritual grace? though you have been constant at the place of worship, let me ask you, what is that unless you have brought your heart with you? Have you always heard as you would desire to hear if the sermon should be your last? Have you always prayed as you would desire to pray if you knew that rising from your knees you would have to lie down in your grave? Oh no, my brethren, we are too cold, too lukewarm, too chilled in our affections; we must mourn before God that with us, even with us, there are sins against the Lord our God.

4. But again, I have to speak to a character of a very common kind. There is a man here who says, "Well, sir, I make no profession of religion—do not think of doing such a thing. I hate hypocrisy of all things in the world. It is true, sir, I commit a great many faults, and am often very loose, but then you know everybody knows me; they can see my character at once. I never cheat anybody. I would not be a cant, to go up to a place of worship and then go on as some people do afterwards; I would not be taking the sacrament one day and then be grinding the poor on the morrow. No, sir, I am as *honest* as possible, and I have no doubt that when I stand before Almighty God I shall have as good a time of it as some of these professing Christians." Well, my friend, I like honesty; but do you know I am inclined to think that there is a little hypocrisy about you. I think you are not quite as honest as you seem to be; for if I were to put some very pointed questions to you, I should not be surprised if you were to get very angry. Have you not heard of the monk who said what a miserable sinner he was, and some one replied, "Ay, that you are, there is no mistake about it." Then the monk grew wrathy, and demanded in a passion, "What do you know against me? I will not be insulted by you." And probably if I were to take you at your word, and say to you, "Yes, that is just the fact, you are as bad a fellow as you can be," you would say, "I will not be insulted, even by a minister; go along with you, sir, what do you know about me?" Your honesty is merely worn as a mask. Your conscience is un

easy, and this is a pat on the back for it, a sort of lullaby to send it to sleep.

But suppose you are honest, let me ask you what there is to boast of in your honesty? A man bounces into the prisoners' box before the Court, and says, "My Lord Mayor, here I am as honest a man as can be; I am no hypocrite: I do not plead 'Not guilty;' for I am in the habit of stealing, and committing larceny, felony, highway robbery, and burglary." Now, is he not an honest man? Yes, with this little exception, that by his own confession he is a rogue. So is it with you, sir, you say you are honest, and yet on your own confession that very honesty which you plead is but a confession of your own abominable wickedness. And you imagine that when you stand before God, if you tell him, "Lord, I never professed to love thee, I never pretended to serve thee," God will accept *your impudence* as honesty—that he will look upon your presumption as sincerity! Why, sir, you cannot mean what you say; you must have deceived yourself most terribly if you do. Your honesty in avowing yourself to be a slave of Satan! Your effrontery in declaring that you are steeped up to the very throat in sin, is this to be an apology for your sin? Oh! man, be wiser. But I put now this question to you. You say that you are no hypocrite, and that you hate hypocrisy. Then I ask you, "Are there not with you, even with you, sins against the Lord your God?" What if you are no hypocrite—yet you are profane, and you curse God to his face; what if you are not a deceiver, yet are you not a drunkard, and a companion of adulterers? Ah, sir, there are sins in your heart, and loathsome ones, too; your hardened acknowledgment that you are a sinner is of no value; that honesty of which you talk is of no value whatever. Get rid, I beseech you, of any hope or confidence that you may place in it.

And now, if I have omitted one class, if there be one into whose heart the question has not penetrated, let me go round personally. I cannot do so literally; but let this finger range you all, and let this eye look into every face. "Are there not with you, even with you, sins against the Lord your God?" Answer it not for others, but for thyself, my hearer; give a reply from the depth of thine own consciousness, and sitting in

this hall, remember thine own sin, and make the silent confession of sin before God. And O, may he fulfil that promise—"He that confesseth his sin and forsaketh it shall find mercy."

II. A Common Sense Inquiry.

They say that common sense is worth all the other senses put together; and methinks if men could but use common sense aright, it might be a fine thing for them in matters of religion. You know what Young says—"All men think all men mortal but themselves." We believe that all men will die, but somehow or other, we fancy we shall live. Now the question I shall put reminds me of that sentence. It is this, "Who are you that you think you shall escape the punishment of sin?" When the first question was put, you were compelled to confess that you had some guilt; who are you that God should let you off and not punish you? who are you that you should stand clear of the sins that you have committed?

All men think all men guilty but themselves. They think all men deserve to be punished; but every man has such a good excuse of his own iniquity, that he thinks surely at the last day he may hope to creep away without the curse. Now I put this common sense question: What is there about you that your sins should not be punished as well as the sins of any other man? Who has given you an exemption? What is there about you that you should walk about this earth and fancy your sins are nothing at all, and that other persons' sins are so tremendous? What fine gentleman are you that you fancy your pedigree to be so distinguished, that because the blood of counts, and dukes, and earls, and princes, and kings may happen to stain your veins, therefore, you shall stand clear? Of course the sins of the lower classes are dreadful—oh, so dreadful—but what is there about yours, my lord, that yours are so trivial? Surely if the poor man is to be punished, the equal law, which stands for all, and which heaven will carry out, will not exempt *you*. Let me remind you, that so far from exempting, it may perhaps give you a double penalty, because your sin has led others into sin, and the prominence of your position has been the means of spreading the pestilence of crime

amongst others. I say to you, sir, however great you may be, what can there be in that roll of honor that you receive among men, that can in the least degree move the Lord your God? How he sniffs at this princely blood; he knows that you were all made of earth as Adam was, and that you all sprung from that gardener—that dishonest gardener, who of old lost his situation, because he would steal his Master's fruit. A pretty pedigree if you trace it up to its root! Oh, sir, there is nothing in it whatever. I beseech you, remember your sins must be punished as well as those of the vagrant, pauper, criminal.

But make way for yonder gentleman; he imagines he is not to be punished because of his respectability. He has been such an honest tradesman; has he not been at the corner of the street since eighteen hundred and two? Whoever heard that he failed and run through the court? Is he not respected by everybody? Well, sir, and what do you think your respectability has to do with it? You have sinned, sir, and you will be punished as surely as anybody else. Every iniquity shall have its just recompense of reward. It will be in vain for you to plead your paltry respectability when you come up before the throne of God. You may wear all the stars and the garters that man was ever befooled with; you may come before God with all the coronets and glittering marks of respectability that ever man dreamt of; but these are nothing. The fire shall try every man's *work* of what sort it is, and if thy works be found evil, those works must be punished, unless thou happily hast found a substitute through whom thy sin can be put away.

What excuses men make on earth. I wish they would always make their excuses believing themselves standing before the judgment-seat. My very honest friend, over there, who said he got drunk, did not mind saying that he was not a cant and a hypocrite. Ah! my friend, you will not be likely to say that when the world is in a blaze, when the pillars of earth are reeling, and the stars are falling, like untimely figs; then you will find that excuse shrivelled up like a scroll. Will you not be afraid to come before God, you mere moralist, and tell him you have kept his law? You, even now, know you have not, and you shall know it better then, when your conscience has been quickened.

And you, formalist, you may condemn others because you attend to every outward ceremony, but the day of judgment will make you feel that ceremonies are less than nothing; and you will be compelled then to cry, "Rocks hide me; mountains on me fall, to hide me from the face of that Lamb whom I despised while I trusted in the outward form and the empty ceremony." Oh, my hearer, whoever you may be, if you have not been born again, if your faith is not fixed on Christ alone, you have no excuse whatever for your sin. You not only are guilty, be you who you may, but you are so guilty that you shall surely be punished for your trespasses. God will not give any exemption to you.

Ah, Mr. Accuser, you turn king's evidence on earth, and so hope to escape the bar of man, but there are no king's evidences at the bar of God. You may accuse the church then; you shall but the more swiftly be condemned. You may rail against your fellow men at the last great day; your words of railing shall but be a witness against you. My dear hearer, if you are not in Christ, I would that I could so preach that you would begin to tremble. If Christ is not in you, your state is such that nothing but the Lord's mercy keeps you out of hell a single moment. The wrath of God has gone out against you; you are condemned already, because you have not believed in Christ. I want, if I can, to draw this bow, not at a venture, but in such a way that the arrow will go home directly to the heart. "Repent and be converted, every one of you, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." Ye have sins, repent of them, I beseech you; bewail yourselves before God. May his Spirit give you a mind for repentance, and make you humble on account of sin; and then remember there is mercy for the contrite; there is pardon for the penitent. But to the man who hugs his sin, or seeks to cloak it, there is no pardon, no mercy, but the wrath of God abideth on him, and the sword of divine justice shall soon be plunged into his heart.

III. A little Advice; and this shall be threefold.

1. My first advice is, *leave other people alone* with regard to finding fault. My dear sir, if you have been busying yourself with the faults of others, be so good as to cease from that occu

pation. I know a loathsome fly that can only live on the foulest food; I will not compare you to it, but if you ever want a resemblance, there is yourself to the life. You remind me, when I hear you talk against others, of those poor creatures dressed in rags with a bag on their backs, who go through the streets picking up every stale bone and every piece of offal they can find; with this exception, that their calling is honorable, and they may possibly live by it, but yours is dishonorable; it is of no service to you or to any one else. There never, perhaps, was an age when men's characters were less safe than now. The best man that breathes beneath the sun may live to find some putrid wretch standing up to accuse him of crimes of which he never dreamed. I beseech you all, if you hear aught against any man, do not believe it till you see it. Liars now-a-days are rife as wasps in summer. Hold off those black hands, thou devilish traducer! O slanderer, have done with thy filthy work; rake no more in the kennel, lest thou be sent to rake in the blazing kennel of hell, there to find out the faults of others which like serpents shall be set to bite thine own bosom and suck thy soul's blood throughout eternity. Take heed, slanderer, for there are hot coals of juniper and fiery irons awaiting the false tongue that lifteth up itself against God and his people.

2. After that first piece of advice, let me give another. *Treat yourselves*, my dear friends, *as you have been accustomed to treat others.* We get another man's character and tie it up to the halberds, and out with our great whip and begin to lay it on with all our force, and after the flogging, we wash the poor creature with a kind of briny pretence at excusing his sins. After that again we throw him back upon the bed of spikes of our own supposition that he is a great deal worse than we have made him out to be. Ah, just serve thyself so. Tie thyself up to the halberds, man, and lay on the whip; do not spare him. When you have got yourself tied up, hit hard, sir; it is a great rascal you are whipping. Never mind his flesh creeping, he deserves it all. Never mind, though the white bones start from the raw red bleeding back—lay it on. Now then, a heavy blow! kill him if you can, the sooner he is dead the better; for when he is once killed as to all idea of righteousness in himself, then he will be

gin to lead a new life and be a new creature in Christ Jesus. Do not be afraid of whipping him, but when the cat-o'-nine-tails is heavy with clots of gore, rub the brine into his back. Tell him that his sins deserve the wrath of hell. Make him feel that it is an awful thing to fall into the hands of our God, for he is a consuming fire. Then throw him down on the bed of spikes, and make him sleep there if he can. Roll him on the spikes, and tell him that, bad as he is, he is worse by nature than by practice. Make him feel that the leprosy lies deep within. Give him no rest. Treat him as cruelly as he could treat another. 'Twould be only his deserts. But who is this that I am telling you to treat so? *Yourself*, my hearer, *yourself*. Be as severe as you can, but let the culprit be yourself. Put on the wig, and sit upon the judgment-seat. Read the king's commission. There is such a commission for you to be a judge. It says—Judge thyself; though it says, Judge not others. Put on, I say, your robes; sit up there lord chief justice of the *Isle of man*, and then bring up the culprit. Make him stand at the bar. Accuse him; plead against him; condemn him. Say: "Take him away, jailor." Find out the hardest punishment you can discover in the statute book, and believe that he deserves it all. Be as severe as ever you can on yourself, even to the putting on the black cap, and reading the sentence of death. When you have done this, you will be in a hopeful way for life, for he that condemns himself God absolves. He that stands self-convicted, may look to Christ hanging on the cross, and see himself hanging there, and see his sins forever put away by the sacrifice of Jesus on the tree.

3. The third piece of counsel, with which I am about to close, is this: My dear hearer, I beseech you *look to the eternal interests of your own souls*. I have hard work to plead this last point. May God the Holy Spirit take it in hand, and it will be done to purpose; but if he do not do it, all I can say will fall with lifeless dulness upon your ear. As well preach to the dead in the grave as to the unawakened sinner, but yet I am commanded to preach to the dead, and therefore I do preach to the dead this morning. My dear hearer, look to thine own soul's salvation These are happy times. We are living just now in a period

when the grace of God is manifesting itself in a singular manner There is more prayer now than there has been in the last ten years; and I believe more outpouring of the Holy Spirit than some of us have ever known. Oh! I beseech you, look well for this auspicious gale. Now the wind is blowing, up with thy sail; when the tide is coming in full, launch thy boat, and oh, may God the Spirit bear thee on towards life and happiness! But, I beseech thee, make thy first object in life thy own salvation. What is thy shop, compared with thy soul? Nay, what is thy body, thine eyes, thy senses, thy reason, compared with thine immortal soul? Let this word ring in thine ears, Eternity! Eternity! Eternity! And oh, I beseech thee, look well to thyself, lest eternity should become to thee a sea without a shore, where fiery billows shall forever toss thy wretched soul. Eternity! Eternity! And must I climb thy topless steeps and never find a summit? Must I plough thy pathless waters and never find a haven? 'Tis even so. Then grant me, God, that I may climb in eternity the mount of bliss, and not the hill of woe; and may I sail across the sea of happiness and joy, and not across the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone!

Look to yourself, sir. This is a day of good tidings for many, may it be a day of good tidings for you! I beseech you, give up thinking about men at large, about the world, and nations; what have you to do with politics? Let your politics be the politics of your own soul. Attend those other things by-and-bye, but now give yourself the favor of your own thoughts. Begin at home. I fear there are more lost through this than almost through any other cause, next to procrastination—thinking about others and forgetting about self. I wish I could put you to-day, in some respects, like those who are in the chapel of the penitentiary, where every man sees the minister during service, but no man sees another. My dear hearer, do recollect that what I have said I mean for you, not for other people. Take it home; and to-day, I beseech you, go to your chamber, and may God compel you by his grace to make a confession of your own sins. Seek a Saviour for yourself, and oh may you find him for yourself! and then begin to seek him for others. If this were a day of famine, would you be content to hear me say,

"There is bread in abundance stored away in the Tower—there is a great quantity of food there?" No, you would say, "Let me go and get some of this bread for myself." You would go home, and the cries of your wife and children would compel you to arouse. You would say, "I hear there is bread, I must get it, for I cannot bear to see my wife and children starving." Oh! sinner, hear the cry of thy poor starving soul; hear, I beseech thee, the cry of thy poor body. Thy body does not wish to be cast into fire, and thy soul shrinketh from the thought of everlasting torment. Hear, then, thine own flesh and blood when it cries to thee. Let thine own nature speak; the voice of nature that dreads pain, and torment, and wrath to come; and when it speaks, listen to it, and come; come, I pray you, to penitence and to faith.

May God the Holy Spirit draw you, or drive you, whichever he pleases, so that you may be brought to life, and peace, and happiness, and salvation, through the precious blood. AMEN.

SERMON VII.

CHRIST TRIUMPHANT.

[The gorgeous imagery with which this sermon invests a subject of surpassing interest, passes before the mind of the reader like a splendid pageant. Though the preacher's fancy may not in every instance conform to the strictest rules of rhetoric, yet what cares either preacher or hearer, so long as those grand realities which inspire Christian hope are pictured before the mind in all the hues of living light. This is a fit companion of the discourse on the Resurrection. Christ Triumphant was delivered in Surrey Music Hall, Sept. 4th, 1859.]

"And naving spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it."—Colossians ii, 15.

To the eye of reason, the Cross is the centre of sorrow and the lowest depth of shame. Jesus dies a malefactor's death. He hangs upon the gibbet of a felon and pours out his blood upon the common mount of doom, with thieves for his companions. In the midst of mockery, and jest, and scorn, and ribaldry, and blasphemy, he gives up the ghost. Earth rejects him and lifts him from her surface, and heaven affords him no light, but darkens the mid-day sun in the hour of his extremity. Deeper in woe than the Saviour dived, imagination cannot descend. A blacker calumny than was cast on him, satanic malice itself could not invent. He hid not his face from shame and spitting; and what shame and spitting it was! To the world, the Cross must ever be the emblem of shame; to the Jew a stumbling-block, and

to the Greek foolishness. How different, however, is the view which presents itself to the eye of faith. Faith knows no shame in the Cross, except the shame of those who nailed the Saviour there; it sees no ground for scorn, but it hurls indignant scorn at sin, the enemy which pierced the Lord. Faith sees woe, indeed, but from this woe it marks a fount of mercy springing. It is true it mourns a dying Saviour, but it beholds him bringing life and immortality to light at the very moment when his soul was eclipsed in the shadow of death. Faith regards the cross, not as the emblem of shame, but as the token of glory. The sons of Belial lay the cross in the dust, but the Christian makes a constellation of it, and sees it glittering in the seventh heaven. Man spits upon it, but believers, having angels for their companions, bow down and worship him who ever liveth, though once he was crucified.

My brethren, our text presents us with a view which faith is certain to discover when its eyes are anointed with the eye-salve of the Spirit. It tells us that the cross was Jesus Christ's field of triumph. There he fought, and there he conquered, too. As a victor on the cross, he divided the spoil. Nay, more than this; in our text the cross is spoken of as being Christ's triumphal chariot in which he rode when he led captivity captive, and received gifts for men. Calvin thus admirably expounds the last sentence of our text: "The expression in the Greek allows, it is true, of our reading—*in himself;* the connection of the passage, however, requires that we read it otherwise; for what would be meager as applied to Christ suits admirably well as applied to the cross. For as he had previously compared the cross to a signal trophy or show of triumph, in which Christ led about his enemies, so he now also compares it to a triumphal car in which he showed himself in great magnificence. For there is no tribunal so magnificent, no throne so stately, no show of triumph so distinguished, no chariot so elevated, as is the gibbet on which Christ has subdued death and the devil, the prince of death; nay, more, has utterly trodden them under his feet."

I shall this morning, by God's help, address you upon the two portions of the text. First, I shall endeavor to describe *Christ as spoiling his enemies on the cross:* and having done that, I shall

lead your imagination and your faith further on to see *the Saviour in triumphal procession upon his cross*, leading his enemies captive, and making a show of them openly before the eyes of he astonished universe.

I. CHRIST MAKING A SPOIL OF PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS.

Satan, leagued with sin and death, had made this world the home of woe. The Prince of the powers of the air, fell usurper, not content with his dominions in hell, must need invade this fair earth. He found our first parents in the midst of Eden; he tempted them to forego their allegiance to the King of heaven, and they became at once his bond-slaves—bond-slaves forever, if the Lord of heaven had not interposed to ransom them. The voice of mercy was heard, while the fetters were being riveted upon their feet, crying, "*Ye shall yet be free!*" In the fulness of time there shall come one who shall bruise the serpent's head, and shall deliver his prisoners from the house of their bondage. Long did the promise tarry. The earth groaned and travailed in its bondage. Man was Satan's slave, and heavy were the clanking chains which were upon his soul. At last, in the fulness of time, the Deliverer came forth, born of a woman. He lay in the manger—*he* who was one day to bind the old dragon and cast him into the bottomless pit, and set a seal upon him. When the old serpent knew that this enemy was born, he conspired to put him to death; he leagued with Herod to seek the young child that he might destroy him. But the providence of God preserved the future conqueror; he went down into Egypt, and there was he hidden for a little season. Anon, when he had come to fulness of years, he made his public advent, and began to preach liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that were bound. Then Satan again shot forth his arrows, and sought to end the existence of the woman's seed.

By divers means he sought to slay him before his time. Once the Jews took up stones to stone him; nor did they fail to repeat the attempt. They sought to cast him down from the brow of a hill headlong. By all manner of devices they labored to take away his life, but his hour was not yet. Dangers might surround him, but he was invulnerable. At last, the tremendous

day arrived. Foot to foot the conqeror must fight with the dread tyrant. A voice was heard in heaven, "This is your hour, and the power of darkness" And Christ himself exclaimed, "Now is the crisis of this world—now must the prince of darkness be cast out." From the table of communion, the Redeemer arose at midnight, and marched forth to the battle. How dreadful was the contest! On the very first onset, the mighty conqueror seemed himself to be vanquished. Beaten to the earth at the first assault, he fell upon his knees and cried, "My father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." Revived in strength, made strong by heaven, he no longer quailed, and from this hour never did he utter a word which looked like renouncing the fight From the terrible skirmish, all red with bloody sweat, he dashed into the thick of the battle. The kiss of Judas was, as it were, the first sounding of the trumpet; Pilate's bar was the glittering of the spear; the cruel lash was the crossing of the swords. But the cross was the centre of the conflict; there, on the top of Calvary, must the dread fight of eternity be fought. Now must the son of God arise, and gird his sword upon his thigh. Dread defeat or glorious conquest awaits the Champion of the church. Which shall it be? We hold our breath with anxious suspense while the storm is raging.

I hear the trumpet sound. The howlings of hell rise in awful clamor. The pit is emptying out its legions. Terrible as lions, hungry as wolves, and black as night, the demons rush on in myriads. Satan's reserved forces, those who had long been kept against this day of terrible battle, are roaring from their dens. See how countless are their armies, and how fierce their countenances. Brandishing his sword, the arch-fiend leads the van, bidding his followers fight neither with small nor great, save only with the King of Israel Terrible are the leaders of the battle. Sin is there, and all its innumerable offspring, spitting forth the venom of asps, and infixing their poison-fangs in the Saviour's flesh. Death is there upon his pale horse, and his cruel dart tears its way through the body of Jesus, even to his inmost heart. He is "exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." Hell comes, with all its coals of juniper and fiery darts. But chief and head amongst them is Satan; remembering well the ancient

day when Christ hurled him from the battlements of heaven, he rushes with all his malice to the attack. The darts shot into the air are so many that they blind the sun. Darkness covers the battle-field, and like that of Egypt, it was a darkness which might be felt. Long does the battle seem to waver, for there is but one against many. One man—nay, tell it, lest any should misunderstand me, one *God* stands in battle array against ten thousands of principalities and powers. On, on they come, and he receives them all. Silently at first he permits their ranks to break upon him, too terribly enduring hardness to spare a thought for shouting.

But at last the battle-cry is heard. He who is fighting for his people begins to shout, but it is a shout which makes the church tremble. He cries, "I thirst." The battle is so hot upon him, and the dust so thick that he is choked with thirst. Surely, now, he is about to be defeated? Wait awhile; see ye yon heaps; all these have fallen beneath his arm, and as for the rest, fear not the issue. The enemy is but rushing to his own destruction. In vain his fury and his rage, for see the last rank is charging, the battle of ages is almost over. At last the darkness is dispersed. Hark how the conqueror cries, "It is finished." And where are now his enemies? They are all dead. There lies the king of terrors, pierced through with one of his own darts! There lies Satan with his head all bleeding, broken! Yonder crawls the broken-backed serpent, writhing in ghastly misery! As for sin, it is cut in pieces, and scattered to the winds of heaven! "*It is finished*," cries the conqueror, as he came with dyed garments from Bozrah, "I have trodden the wine-press alone, I have trampled them in my fury, and their blood is sprinkled on my garments."

And now he proceeds to *divide the spoil*.

We pause here to remark that when the spoil is divided it is a sure token that the battle is completely won. The enemy will never suffer the spoil to be divided among the conquerors as long as he has any strength remaining. We may gather from our text of a surety, that Jesus Christ has totally routed, thoroughly defeated, once for all, and put to retreat all his enemies, or else he would not have divided the spoil.

And now, what means this expression of Christ dividing the spoil? I take it that it means, first of all, that *he disarmed all his enemies.* Satan came against Christ; he had in his hand a sharp sword called the Law, dipped in the poison of sin, so that every wound which the law inflicted was deadly. Christ dashed this sword out of Satan's hand, and there stood the prince of darkness unarmed. His helmet was cleft in twain, and his head was crushed as with a rod of iron. Death rose against Christ. The Saviour snatched his quiver from him, emptied out all his darts, cut them in two, gave Death back the feather end, but kept the poisoned barbs, that he might never destroy the ransomed. Sin came against Christ; but sin was utterly cut in pieces. It had been Satan's armour-bearer, but its shield was cast away, and it lay dead upon the plain. Is it not a noble picture to behold all the enemies of Christ?—nay, my brethren, all your enemies, and mine, totally disarmed? Satan has nothing left him now wherewith he may attack us. He may attempt to injure us, but wound us he never can, for his sword and spear are utterly taken away. In the old battles, especially among the Romans, after the enemy had been overcome, it was the custom to take away all their weapons and ammunition; afterwards they were stripped of their armor and their garments, their hands were tied behind their backs, and they were made to pass under the yoke. Even so hath Christ done with sin, death, and hell; he hath taken their armor, spoiled them of all their weapons, and made them all to pass under the yoke; so that now they are our slaves, and we in Christ are conquerors of them who were mightier than we.

In the next place, when the victors divide the spoil, they carry away not only the weapons but all the treasures which belong to their enemies. They dismantle their fortresses, and rifle all their stores, so that in future they may not be able to renew the attack. Christ hath done the like with all his enemies. Old Satan had taken away from us all our possessions. Paradise he had added to his territories. All the joy, and happiness, and peace of man, he had taken—not that he could enjoy them himself, but that he delighted to thrust us down into poverty and damnation. Now, all our lost inheritances Christ hath gotten back.

Paradise is ours, and more than all the joy and happiness that Adam had, Christ hath brought back to us. O, robber of our race, how art thou spoiled and carried away captive! Didst thou despoil Adam of his riches? The second Adam hath despoiled thee! How is the hammer of the whole earth cut asunder and broken, and the waster is become desolate. Now shall the needy be remembered, and again shall the meek inherit the earth. "Then is the prey of a great spoil divided, the lame take the prey."

Moreover, when victors divide the spoil, it is usual to take away all the ornaments from the enemy, the crowns and the jewels. Christ on the cross did the like. Satan had a crown on his head, a haughty diadem of triumph. "I fought the first Adam," he said, "I overcame him, and here's my glittering diadem." Christ snatched it from his brow in the hour when he bruised the serpent's head. And now Satan cannot boast of a single victory, he is thoroughly defeated. In the first skirmish he vanquished manhood, but in the second battle manhood vanquished him. The crown is taken from him. He is no longer the prince of God's people. His reigning power is gone. He may tempt, but he cannot compel; he may threaten, but he cannot subdue; for the crown is taken from his head, and the mighty are brought low. O sing unto the Lord a new song, all ye his people; make a joyful noise unto him with psalms, all ye his redeemed; for he hath broken in sunder the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron; he hath broken the bow, and cut the spear in sunder; he hath burned the chariots in the fire, he hath dashed in pieces our enemies, and divided the spoil with the strong.

And now, what says this to us? If Christ on the cross hath spoiled Satan, let us not be afraid to encounter this great enemy of our souls. My brethren, in all things we must be made like unto Christ. We must bear our cross, and on that cross we must fight as he did with sin, and death, and hell. Let us not fear. The result of the battle is certain, for as the Lord our Saviour has overcome once, even so shall we most surely conquer in him. Be ye none of you afraid with sudden fear when the evil one cometh upon you. If he accuse you, reply to him in these words: "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's

elect?" If he condemn you, laugh him to scorn, crying: "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather hath risen again." If he threaten to divide you from Christ's love, encounter him with confidence: "I am persuaded that neither things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus your Lord." If he let loose your sins upon you dash the hell-dogs aside with this. "If any man sin, *we* have an advocate with the Father Jesus Christ the righteous." If death should threaten you, shout in his very face: "O death! where is thy sting; O grave! where is thy victory." Hold up the cross before you. Let that be your shield and buckler, and rest assured that as your master not only routed the foe, but afterwards took the spoil, it shall be even so with you.

Your battles with Satan shall turn to your advantage. You shall become all the richer for your antagonists. The more numerous they shall be, the greater shall be your share of the spoil. Your tribulation shall work patience, and your patience experience, and your experience hope—a hope that maketh not ashamed. Through this much tribulation shall you inherit the kingdom, and by the very attacks of Satan shall you be helped the better to enjoy the rest which remaineth to the people of God. Put yourselves in array against sin and Satan. All ye that bend the bow shoot at them, spare no arrows, for your enemies are rebels against God. Go ye up against them, put your feet upon their necks, fear not, neither be ye dismayed, for the battle is the Lord's and he will deliver them into your hands. Be ye very courageous, remembering that you have to fight with a stingless dragon. He may hiss, but his teeth are broken and his poison fang extracted. You have to do battle with an enemy already scarred by your Master's weapons. You have to fight with a naked foe. Every blow you give him tells upon him, for he has nothing to protect him. Christ hath stripped him naked, divided his armor, and left him defenceless before his people. Be not afraid. The lion may howl, but rend you in pieces he never can. The enemy may rush in upon you with hideous noise and terrible alarms, but there is no real cause for fear. Stand fast in the Lord. Ye war against a king

who hath lost his crown; ye fight against an enemy whose cheek-bones have been smitten, and the joints of whose loins have been loosed. Rejoice, rejoice ye in the day of battle, for it is for you the beginning of an eternity of triumph.

I have thus endeavored to dwell upon the first part of the text, Christ on the cross divided the spoil, and he would have us do the same.

II. CHRIST IN TRIUMPHAL PROCESSION ON THE CROSS.

When a Roman general had performed great feats in a foreign country, his highest reward was that the Senate should decree him a triumph. Of course there was a division of spoil made on the battle-field, and each soldier and each captain took his share; but every man looked forward rapturously to the day when they should enjoy the public triumph. On a set day the gates of Rome were thrown open; the houses were all decorated; the people climbed to the roofs, or stood in great crowds along the streets. The gates were opened, and by-and-bye the first legion began to stream in with its banners flying, and its trumpets sounding. The people saw the stern warriors as they marched along the street returning from their blood-red fields of battle. After one half of the army had thus defiled, your eye would rest upon one who was the centre of all attraction: riding in a noble chariot, drawn by milk-white horses, there came the conqueror himself, crowned with the laurel crown and standing erect. Chained to his chariot were the kings and mighty men of the regions which he had conquered. Immediately behind them came part of the booty. There were carried the ivory and the ebony, and the beasts of the different countries which he had subdued. After these came the rest of the soldiery, a long, long stream of valiant men, all of them sharing the triumphs of their captain. Behind them came banners, the old flags which had floated aloft in the battle, the standards which had been taken from the enemy. And after these, large painted emblems of the great victories of the conqueror. Upon one there would be a huge map depicting the rivers which he had crossed, or the seas through which his navy had found their way. Everything was represented in a picture, and the populace gave a fresh shout

as they saw the memorial of each triumph. And behind, with the trophies, would come the prisoners of less eminent rank. Then the rear would be closed with sound of trumpet, adding to the acclamation of the throng. It was a noble day for old Rome. Children would never forget those triumphs; they would reckon their years from the time of one triumph to another. High holiday was kept. Women cast down flowers before the conqueror, and he was the true monarch of the day.

Now, our apostle had evidently seen such a triumph, or read of it, and he takes this as a representation of what Christ did on the cross. He says, "Jesus made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it." Have you ever thought that the cross could be the scene of a triumph? Most of the old commentators can scarcely conceive it to be true. They say, "This must certainly refer to Christ's resurrection and ascension." But, nevertheless, so saith the Scripture, even on the cross Christ enjoyed a triumph. Yes! while those hands were bleeding, the acclamations of angels were being poured upon his head. Yes, while those feet were being rent with the nails, the noblest spirits in the world were crowding round him with admiration. And when upon that blood-stained cross he died in agonies unutterable, there was heard a shout such as never was heard before for the ransomed in heaven, and all the angels of God with loudest harmony chanted his praise. Then was sung, in fullest chorus, the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, for he had indeed cut Rahab and sorely wounded the dragon. Sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously The Lord shall reign for ever and ever, King of kings, and Lord of lords.

I do not feel able, however, this morning, to work out a scene so grand, and yet so contrary to everything that flesh could guess as a picture of Christ actually triumphing on the cross—in the midst of his bleeding, his wounds, and his pains, actually being a triumphant victor, and admired of all. I choose, rather, to take my text thus: The cross is the ground of Christ's ultimate triumph. He may be said to have really triumphed there, because it was by that one act of his, that one offering of himself, that he completely vanquished all his foes, and forever sat down

at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens. In the cross, to the spiritual eye, every victory of Christ is contained. It may not be there in fact, but it is there in effect; the germ of his glories may be discovered by the eye of faith in the agonies of the cross.

Bear with me while I humbly attempt to depict the triumph which now results from the cross.

Christ has forever overcome all his foes, and divided the spoil upon the battle-field, and now, even at this day, is he enjoying the well-earned reward and triumph of his fearful struggle. Lift up your eyes to the battlements of heaven, the great metropolis of God. The pearly gates are wide open, and the city shines with her jewelled walls like a bride prepared for her husband Do you see the angels crowding to the battlements? Do you observe them on every mansion of the celestial city, eagerly desiring and looking for something which has not yet arrived! At last, there is heard the sound of a trumpet, and the angels hurry to the gates—the vanguard of the redeemed is approaching the city. Abel comes in alone, clothed in a crimson garb, the herald of a glorious army of martyrs. Hark to the shout of acclamation! This is the first of Christ's warriors, at once a soldier and a trophy, that have been delivered. Close at his heels there follow others, who in those early times had learned the coming Saviour's fame. Behind them a mighty host may be discovered of patriarchal veterans, who have witnessed to the coming of the Lord in a wanton age. See Enoch still walking with his God, and singing sweetly—"Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints." There, too, is Noah, who had sailed in the ark with the Lord as his pilot. Then follow Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Moses, and Joshua, and Samuel, and David, all mighty men of valor. Hearken to them as they enter! Every one of them waving his helmet in the air, cries, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood, unto him be honor, and glory, and dominion, and power, for ever and ever."

Look, my brethren, with admiration upon this noble army! Mark the heroes as they march along the golden streets, everywhere meeting an enthusiastic welcome from the angels who have kept their first estate. On, on they pour, those countless

legions—was there ever such a spectacle? It is not the pageant of a day, but the "show" of all time. For four thousand years streams on the army of Christ's redeemed. Sometimes there is a short rank, for the people have been often minished and brought low; but, anon, a crowd succeeds, and on, on, still on they come, all shouting, all praising him who loved them and gave himself for them. But see, *he* comes! I see his immediate herald, clad in a garment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins. The Prince of the house of David is not far behind. Let every eye be open. Now, mark, how not only angels, but the redeemed crowd the windows of heaven! He comes! he comes! It is Christ himself! Lash the snow-white coursers up the everlasting hills; "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up ye everlasting doors, that the King of glory may come in." See, he enters in the midst of acclamations. It is he! but he is not crowned with thorns. It is he! but though his hands wear the scar, they are stained with blood no longer. His eyes are as a flame of fire, and on his head are many crowns, and he hath on his vesture and on his thigh written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. He stands aloft in that chariot which is "paved with love for the daughters of Jerusalem." Clothed in a vesture dipped in blood, he stands confessed the emperor of heaven and earth. On, on he rides, and louder than the noise of many waters and like the voice of seven thunders are the acclamations which surround him!

See how John's vision has become a reality, for now we can see for ourselves, and hear with our ears, the new song whereof he writes. "They sung a new song, saying, thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which

is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four-and-twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth forever and ever."

But who are those at his chariot wheels? Who are those grim monsters that come howling in the rear? I know them. First of all, there is the arch enemy. Look to the old serpent, bound and fettered, how he writhes his ragged length along! his azure hues all tarnished and trailing in the dust, his scales despoiled of their once-vaunted brightness. Now is captivity led captive, and death and hell shall be cast into the lake of fire. With what derision is the chief of rebels regarded. How is he become the object of everlasting contempt. He that sitteth in the heavens doth laugh, the Lord doth have him in derision. Behold how the serpent's head is broken, and the dragon is trampled under foot. And now regard attentively yon hideous monster, *sin*, chained hand in hand with his satanic sire. See how he rolls his fiery eye-balls, how he twists and writhes in agonies. Mark how he glares upon the holy city, but is unable to spit his venom there, for he is chained and gagged, and dragged along an unwilling captive at the wheels of the victor. And there, too, is old Death, with his darts all broken and his hands behind him, —the grim king of terrors, he too is a captive. Hark to the songs of the redeemed, of those who have entered Paradise, as they see these mighty prisoners dragged along! "Worthy is he," they shout, "to live and reign at his Almighty Father's side, for he hath ascended up on high, he hath led captivity captive, and received gifts for men."

And behind them all, I see the great multitude of the ransomed streaming in. The apostles first arrive in one goodly fellowship, hymning their Lord; and then their immediate successors; and then a long array of those who, through cruel mockings and blood, through flame and sword, have followed their Master. These are they of whom the world was not worthy, brightest among the stars of heaven. Regard also the mighty preachers and confessors of the faith, Chrysostom, Athanasius,

Augustine, and the like. Witness their holy unanimity in praising their Lord. Then let your eye run along the glittering ranks till you come to the days of Reformation. I see in the midst of the squadron, Luther, and Calvin, and Zwingle, three holy brothers. I see just before them Wickliffe, and Huss, and Jerome marching together. And then I see a company that no man can number, converted to God through these mighty reformers, who now follow in the rear of the King of kings and Lord of lords. And looking down to our own time, I see the stream broader and deeper. For many are the soldiers who have in these last times entered into their Master's triumph. We may mourn their absence from *us*, but we must rejoice in their presence with the *Lord*. But what is the unanimous shout, what is the one song that rolls from the first rank to the last? It is this: "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever!" Have they changed the time? Have they supplanted his name by another? Have they put the crown on another head, or elevated another hero to the chariot? Ah, no; they are content still to let the triumphant procession stream along its glorious length; still to rejoice as they behold fresh trophies of his love, for every soldier is a trophy, every warrior in Christ's army is another proof of his power to save, and his victory over death and hell.

I have not time to enlarge further, or else I might describe the grand pictures at the end of the procession; for in the old Roman triumphs, the deeds of the conqueror were all depicted in paintings. The towns he had taken, the rivers he had passed, the provinces he had subdued, the battles he had fought, were represented in pictures, and exposed to the view of the people, who, with great festivity and rejoicing, accompanied him in throngs, or beheld him from the windows of their houses, and filled the air with their acclamations. I might present to you, first of all, the picture of hell's dungeons blown to atoms. Satan had prepared, in the depths of darkness, a prison-house for God's elect, but Christ has not left one stone upon another. On the picture I see the chains broken in pieces, the prison doors burnt with fire, and all the depths of the vasty deep shaken to their foundations. On another picture I see heaven open to all believers; I see the

gates that were fast shut heaved back by the golden lever of Christ's atonement. I see on another picture, the grave despoiled; I behold Jesus in it, slumbering for awhile, and then rolling away the stone and rising to immortality and glory. But we cannot stay to describe these mighty victories of his love. We know that the time shall come when the triumphant procession shall cease, when the last of his redeemed shall have entered into the city of happiness and of joy, and when with the shout of a trumpet heard for the last time, he shall ascend to heaven, and take his people up to reign with God, even our Father, forever and ever.

Our only question, and with that we conclude, is, have we a good hope through grace that we shall march in that sublime procession? Shall we pass under review in that day of pomp and glory? Say, my soul, shalt thou have an humble part in that glorious pageant? Wilt thou follow at his chariot wheels? Wilt thou join in the hosannas? Shall thy voice help to swell the everlasting chorus? Sometimes, I fear it shall not. There are times when the awful question comes—what if my name should be left out when he reads the muster-roll? Brethren, does not that thought trouble you? But yet I put the question again. Can you answer it? Will you be there—shall you see this pomp? Will you behold him triumph over sin, death and hell at last? Canst thou answer this question? There is another, but the answer will serve for both—dost thou believe on the Lord Jesus Christ? Is he thy confidence and thy trust? Hast thou committed thy soul to his keeping? Reposing on his might, canst thou say for thine immortal spirit—

> "Other refuge have I none,
> Hangs my helpless soul on thee?"

If thou canst say that, thine eyes shall see him in the day of his glory; nay, thou shalt share his glory, and sit with him upon his throne, even as he has overcome and sits down with his Father upon his throne. I blush to preach as I have done this morning, on a theme far beyond my power; yet I could not leave it unsung, but, as best I might, sing it. May God enlarge

your faith, and strengthen your hope, and inflame your love, and make you ready to be made partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, that when he shall come with flying clouds, on wings of wind, you may be ready to meet him, and may with him ascend to gaze forever on the vision of his glory.

May God grant this blessing, for Christ's sake. AMEN.

SERMON VIII.

REMEMBER DEATH.

[PICTORIAL representations of a subject so grand and solemn as death, is a perilous undertaking before a public audience, even for one with the fertile imagination and fluent speech of the author. This sermon was preached in Exeter Hall, March 18, 1860 and was heard with such serious attention and profit, that Spurgeon himself says, "Its solemn warnings have been, in the hand of God, the means of alarming and convincing many careless ones; it has had the high honor of bringing poor procrastinating souls to decision." To the reader, it lacks the living voice and action which made its spoken lessons more impressive. To careless minds, these sad thoughts are most unwelcome, but most profitable. Why should life claim all regard, and death have none?]

"Oh that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end."—DEUT. xxxii. 29.

MAN is unwilling to consider the subject of death. The shroud, the mattock, and the grave, he labors to keep continually out of sight. He would live here always if he could; and since he cannot, he at least will put away every emblem of death as far as possible from his sight. Perhaps there is no subject so important, which is so little thought of. Our common proverb that we use is just the expression of our thoughts. "We must live." But

if we were wiser, we should alter it and say, "We must die." Necessity for life there is not; life is a prolonged miracle. Necessity for death there certainly is; it is the end of all things. Oh that the living would lay it to heart. Some years ago, a celebrated author—Drelincourt—wrote a work on Death; a valuable work in itself, but it commanded no sale whatever. There were no men who would trouble themselves with death's heads and cross-bones. And to show how foolish man is, a certain doctor went home and wrote a silly ghost story, not one word of which was true, sent it to the bookseller, he stitched it up with his volume, and the whole edition sold. Anything men will think of rather than death—any fiction, any lie. But this stern reality, this master truth, he puts away, and will not suffer it to enter his thoughts.

The old Egyptians were wiser than we are. We are told that at every feast there was always one extraordinary guest that sat at the head of the table. He ate not, he drank not, he spake not, he was closely veiled. It was a skeleton which they had placed there, to warn them that even in their feastings they should remember there would be an end of life. We are so fond of living, so sad at the very thought of death, that such a *memento mori* as that would be quite unbearable in our days of feasting. Yet our text tells us that we should be wise, if we would consider our latter end. And certainly we should be, for the practical effect of a true meditation upon death would be exceedingly healthful to our spirits. It would cool that ardor of covetousness, that fever of avarice, always longing after and accumulating wealth, if we did but remember that we should have to leave our stores, that when we have gotten our most, all that we can ever inherit for our body is one six feet of earth. It would certainly help us to set lightly by the things which we here possess. Perhaps it might lead us to set our affections upon things above, and not upon the mouldering things below. At any rate, thoughts of death might often check us when we are about to sin. If we look at sin by the light of death's lantern, we might see more of the hollowness of sinful pleasure, and of the emptiness of worldly vanity. Surely we should be kept back from many an evil act, if we remembered that we must all

appear before the judgment seat of Christ. And, mayhap too, these thoughts of death might be blessed to us in even a higher sense, for we might hear an angel speaking to us from the grave, "Prepare to meet your God." This might lead us to set our house in order, because we must die and not live. If even one of these effects shall be produced by considering our latter end, it would be the purest wisdom continually to walk arm in arm with that skeleton teacher—Death.

I propose this morning, as God shall help me, to lead you to consider death. May the Holy Spirit bend your thoughts downward to the tomb. May he guide you to the grave, that you may there see the end of all earthly hopes, of all worldly pomp and show. In doing this, I shall thus divide my subject. First, *let us consider Death;* secondly, *let us consider the warnings which Death has given us already;* and then, further, *let us picture ourselves as dying.*

I. In the first place, then, LET US CONSIDER DEATH.

1. Let us begin by remarking its origin. Why is it that I must die? Whence came these seeds of corruption that are sown within this flesh? The angels die not. Those pure ethereal spirits live on without knowing the weakness of old age, and without suffering the penalties of decay. Why must I die! Why has God made me so curiously and so wondrously—why is all this skill and wisdom shown in the fashioning of a man that is to endure for an hour, and then to crumble back to his native element—the dust? Can it be that God originally made me to die? Did he intend that the noble creature, who is but a little lower than the angels, who hath dominion over the works of God's hands, beneath whose feet he hath put all beasts of the field, yea, and the fowl of the air and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the sea—did he intend that that creature should waste away as a shadow, and should be as a dream that continueth not? Come, my soul, let this melancholy thought thrust itself upon thy attention. Thou diest because thou sinnest! Thy death is not God's primal ordinance, but it is a penalty brought upon thee on account of the transgression of thy first parent. Thou wouldst have been immortal,

if Adam had been immaculate. Sin, thou art the mother of Death! Adam, thou hath digged the graves of thy children! We might have lived on, in everlasting youth, if it had not been for that thrice-cursed theft of the forbidden fruit. Look, then, that thought in the face. Man is a suicide. Sin slays the race. We die, because we have sinned. How this should make us hate sin! How we should detest it, because the wages of sin is death! Brand, then, from this day forward, the word *Murderer* on the brow of sin.

2. In considering Death, let us go a step further, and observe not only its origin, but its *certainty*. Die I *must*. I may have escaped a thousand diseases, but Death has an arrow in his quiver that will reach my heart at last. True, I have one hope, a blissful hope, that if my Lord and Master shall soon come, I shall be among the number of them that are alive and remain, who shall never die, but who shall be changed. But, however if it be not so, die I must. "It is appointed unto all men once to die, and after death the judgment." Run! run! but the fleet pursuer shall overtake thee. Like the stag before the hounds we fly swifter than the breeze, but the dogs of Death shall outstrip us: Fever and plague, weakness and decay; he hath but to let slip these, and they are on us, and who can resist their fury? There is a black camel upon which Death rides, say the Arabs, and that must kneel at every man's door. With impartial hand he dashes down the palace of the monarch as well as the cabin of the peasant. At every man's door there hangs that black knocker, and Death hath but to uplift it and the dread sound is heard, and the uninvited guest sits down to banquet on our flesh and blood. Die I must. No physician can stretch out my life beyond its allotted term. I must cross that river. I may use a thousand stratagems, but I cannot escape. Even now I am like the deer surrounded by the hunters in a circle, a circle which is narrowing every day; and soon must I fall and pour out my life upon the ground. Let me never forget, then, that while other things are uncertain, death is sure.

3. Then, looking a little further into this shade, let me remember *the time of my Death*. To God it is fixed and certain. He has ordained the hour in which I must expire. A thousand

angels cannot keep me from the grave an instant when that hour has struck. Nor could legions of spirits cast me into the pit before the appointed time.

> 'Plagues and death around me fly,
> Till he please I cannot die;
> Not a single shaft can hit,
> Till the God of love sees fit."

All our times are in his hand. The means, the way I shall die, how long I shall be in dying, the sickness, and in what place I shall be seized with the contagion, all these are ordained. God hath in his mind's eye the wave that shall engulph me, or the bed in which I shall breathe out my last. He knows the stones that shall mark my sleeping place He hath ordained everything; and in that Book of Fate it stands, and never can it be changed. But to me it is quite uncertain. I know not when, nor where, nor how I shall breathe out my life. Into that sacred ark I cannot look—that ark of the secrets of God. I cannot pry between the folded leaves of that book which is chained to the throne of God, wherein is written the whole history of man. When I walk by the way I may fall dead in the streets; an appoplexy may usher me into the presence of my Judge. Riding along the road, I may be carried as swiftly to my tomb. While I am thinking of the multitudes of miles over which the fiery wheels are running, I may be in a minute, without a moment's warning, sent down to the shades of death. In my own house I am not safe. There are a thousand gates to Death. From this spot in which I stand, there is a straight path to the grave; and where you sit there is an entrance into eternity. Oh, let us bethink, then, how uncertain life is. Talk we of a hair; it is something massive when compared with the thread of life. Speak we of a spider's web; it is ponderous compared with the web of life. We are but as a bubble; nay, less substantial. As a moment's foam upon the breaker, such are we. As an instant spray—nay, the drops of spray are enduring as the orbs of heaven compared with the moments of our life. Oh, let us, then, prepare to meet our God, because, when and how we shall appear before him is quite unknown to us. We may never go

out of this hall alive. Some of us may be carried hence on young men's shoulders, as Ananias and Sapphira of old. We may not live to see our homes again. We may have given the last kiss to the beloved cheek, and spoken the last word of fondness to those who are near to our hearts. We are on the brink of our tombs.

"Ten thousand to their endless home
This solemn moment fly;
And we are to the margin come,
And soon expect to die!"

4. But I must not linger here, but go on to observe *the terrors which surround Death.* I would call to your memory to-day the pains, the groans, the dying strife, which make our affrighted souls start back from the tomb. To the best men in the world dying is a solemn thing. Though "I can read my title clear to mansions in the skies," and know that I have a portion among them that are sanctified, yet must it always give some trembling to the flesh, some quivering to the human frame, to think of breathing out my soul, and launching on an unknown sea. He that can laugh at death is a fool—stark, staring mad is he. He who can make jokes with regard to his end will find that if he should die jesting, it will be no jest to be damned. When this tent is being taken down, when this clay tenement begins to creak and shake in the rough north wind of Death, when stone after stone tumbles from its place, and all the bonds are loosened, it will be a terrible moment then. When the poor soul stands beneath the temple of the body, and sees it shake, sees rifts in its roof, sees the pillars tremble, and all the ruins thereof falling about it, it will be an awful moment—a moment which, if it were continued and lengthened, would be the most dread picture of hell that can be presented to us, for hell is called the second Death. An endless dying, the pang of death prolonged eternally, the woes and the grief of dissolution made to last without an end, that, I say, is one of the most terrible pictures of hell. Death itself must be a tremendous thing. Let me think, too, that when I die I must leave behind me all that I have on earth. Farewell! to that house which I have so fondly called

my home. Farewell to that fireside and the little prattlers that have climbed my knee. Farewell! to her who has shared my life and been the beloved one of my bosom. Farewell! all things—the estate, the gold, the silver. Farewell! earth. Thy fairest beauties melt away, thy most melodious strains die in the dim distance. I hear no more, and see no more. Ears and eyes are closed, and men shall carry me out and bury their dead out of their sight. And, now, farewell! to all the means of grace. That passing bell is the last sound of the sanctuary that shall toll for me. No church bell now shall summon me to the house of God. If I have neglected Christ, I shall hear of Christ no more. No grace presented now; no striving of the Spirit.

> "Fix'd is my everlasting fate,
> Could I repent, 'tis now too late."

Death hath now closed up the windows of my soul. If I am impenitent, an everlasting darkness, a darkness like that of Egypt, that may be felt, rests on me forever. Ye may sing, ye saints of God, but I must howl eternally. Ye may gather round the Sacramental Table and remember your Master's death, but I am cast away forever from his presence, where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. This is to die, my friends, and to die with vengeance. To the believer there are softening tints; there are lines in the picture which take out the blackness. The very shades help to make the believer's glory brighter; the grim passage of Death makes heaven shine with a superior lustre. He thinks of the land beyond the flood, of the beatific vision, of the face of the exalted Redeemer, of a seat at his right hand, of crowns of glory, and of harps of immortal bliss. But to you who are ungodly and unconverted, Death has only this black side. It is the leaving of all you have, and of all you love. It is an entering upon eternal poverty, everlasting shame, and infinite woe. Oh that ye were wise, ye careless sinners—oh that ye were wise, that ye understood this, and would consider your latter end.

5. I have thus you see pushed into another head which I meant to have dwelt upon for a moment, viz., *the results of death.*

For, verily, its results and terrors to the wicked are the same. Oh that ye were wise to consider them. Let me, however, remind the Christian, in order that there may be a flash of light in the thick darkness of this sermon, that Death, to him, should never be a subject upon which he should loathe to meditate. To die!—to shake off my weakness and to be girded with omnipotence. To die!—to leave my pangs, and pains, and fears, and woe, my feeble heart, my unbelief, my tremblings and my griefs, and leap into the divine bosom. To die! What have I to lose by Death? The tumult of the people and the strife of tongues. A joyous loss indeed! To the believer Death is gain, unalloyed gain. Do we leave our friends by Death? We shall see better friends, and more numerous up yonder, in the general assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven. Do we leave our house and comforts? "There is a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Do we lose our life? Ah no, we gain a better far; for remember that we die to live, and then we live to die no more. Without any fraction of loss, death to the believer is a glorious gain. It is greatly wise, then, for a Christian to talk with his last hours, because those last hours are the beginning of his glory. He leaves off to sin and begins to be perfect; he ceases to suffer and begins to be happy; he renounces all his poverty and shame, and begins to be rich and honored. Comfort, then, comfort, then, ye sorrowing and suffering Christians. "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God." Say unto them your warfare is accomplished, your sin is pardoned, and you shall see your Lord's face without a veil between.

II. I shall now turn to the second head of my discourse, to CONSIDER THE WARNINGS WHICH DEATH HATH ALREADY GIVEN TO EACH ONE OF US.

We are so prone to turn away from this subject, that you must excuse me if I continue to bring you back again, again, and again to it, during the brief time that can be allotted to the discourse of this morning. Death hath been very near to many of us; he has crossed the ecliptic of our life many and many a time. That baleful planet has often been in close conjunction with us.

Let us just observe how frequently he has been in our *house*. Call ye them to mind, first of all, how many warnings you have had in the loss of relatives. There is not a person here, I imagine, who has not had to make a pilgrimage to the tomb, to weep over the ashes of your friends. During the few years that I have been the pastor of this church, how many times have I journeyed to the tomb. One after another of the valiant men in our Israel have been taken away. Many who were my spiritual sons and daughters, whom I buried first in the tomb of baptism, have I had to bury afterwards in the tomb of death. The scene is always changing. As I stand in my pulpit, I remark many an old familiar face. But I have to observe also, how many places there are which would have been empty, if it were not that God has sent other Davids to occupy David's seat. And, my dear friends, it cannot be long with some of you, ere it shall be my mournful task, unless I die myself, to go weeping over your bodies to the tomb. That funeral oration may soon be pronounced over some of you. And you have good reason to expect it, when you think how one after another of those who were the friends of your youth have gone. Where is the wife with whom you lived joyously in the early days of your life? Or where is the husband, who so often looked on you with eyes of love? Where are those children who sprung up like flowers, but withered as they bloomed? Where are those brothers and those sisters, the elder born, that have crossed the flood before us? or, those younger ones, who shone with us for an hour, but whose sun, even before it had reached its zenith, had set in eternal night? Brothers and sisters, Death has made sad inroads into some of our families. There be some of you who stand today like a man upon the shore when the tide is swelling towards his feet. There came one wave, and it took away the grandmother; another came, and a mother was swept away; another came, and the wife was taken; and now it dashes at your feet. How long shall it be ere it breaks over you—and you, too, are carried away into the bosom of the deep of Death! The Lord has given many of you serious and solemn warnings. I do entreat you, listen to them. Harken now, to the cry which comes up from the grave of those who being dead yet speak to you. Hear them now, those lately buried ones, as they cry, "Children,

husbands, wives, brothers, sisters, prepare to meet your God, lest ye should fail in the last dread day."

Think, again, what solemn and repeated warnings we have had of late, not in our families, but in the wide, wide world. It is a singular fact, that afflictions and accidents never come alone. A few weeks ago, we were all shocked with the news, that one who had sailed across the treacherous sea full many a time, and who at last had risen in his profession to become captain of the largest vessel that was ever launched upon the deep, had suddenly perished in calm waters, and his spirit had appeared before his God. It seemed to us a sad, sad thing, that one who had endured the tempest and the storm, perhaps a thousand times, should sink as a ship that founders in the mid ocean, when not a wave rocks her keel. He is at home—he has just left his family—his foot slips, and he finds a watery grave. Quick upon that, as one messenger follows another, came the news across the sea of the falling of a mill, in which so many hundreds were at once overwhelmed by the ruins, and sent hurriedly into the presence of God. We can little tell what a thrill of horror went through the towns which were adjacent to that mill in America. Even we ourselves, across the leagues of sea, felt stunned by the blow, when so large a number of our fellow-creatures were hurried from this state of being into another. Immediately after that, there came another calamity, which is just fresh in our memory. A train is whirling along, and suddenly the iron horse leaps from his road, and men who are talking together, as fully at ease as we are, amid the breaking of bones, and the crashing of timber, and whirlwinds of dust and steam, are snatched from time into eternity. And, now, this last week, how many tokens have we had that man is mortal? A judge who has long presided over the trials of his criminal countrymen, delivers his charge before a grand jury. He delivers it with his usual wisdom, calmness, and deliberation. He has finished; he pauses; he lifts the smelling bottle to his nose to refresh himself; he falls back; he is carried from the court to receive his own charge, to go from the judgment-seat on which he sat to the judgment-seat before which he must himself stand.

Then, in the same week, a good man who has served his day

and generation in a sister church of this city, is suddenly snatched away from before us. He who aided every good cause, and served his day and generation--perhaps you may know that I allude to Mr. Corderoy—is suddenly taken away, and leaves a whole denomination mourning over him. Nay, nearer than that has the stroke of death come to some of us. It was but last Wednesday that I sat in the house of that mighty servant of God, that great defender of the faith, the Luther of his age, Dr. Campbell; we were talking then about these sudden deaths, little thinking that the like calamity would invade his very family; but, alas! we observed in the next day's paper, that his second son had been swept overboard in returning from one of his voyages to America. A bold brave youth has found a liquid grave. So that here, there, everywhere, O Death! I see thy doings. At home, abroad, on the sea, and across the sea, thou art doing marvels. O thou mower! how long ere thy scythe shall be quiet? O thou destroyer of men, wilt thou never rest, wilt thou ne'er be still? O Death! must thy car go crashing on for ever, and must the blood of human beings mark thy track? Yes, it must be so till He comes who is the King of life and immortality; then the saints shall die no more, but be as the angels of God. So then, Death has spoken very loudly to us as a nation, as a people, and has spoken to many of us, very loudly, in our own family circles.

Now, man, I will come closer home to you still. Death has given home strokes to all of us. Put thy finger in thy own mouth, for thou hast Death's mark there. What mean those decaying teeth, those twitching pains?—an agony despised by those alone who feel it not. Why do some parts of the house tremble and hurry to decay? Because the rottenness that is in the teeth is in the whole body. You talk of a decayed tooth: remember, it is but part of a decayed man. You are yourself rotting, but a little less rapidly. For, to some of you, what warnings Death has given. He has laid his cold hand upon your head and frozen your hair; and there it lies in snowy flakes upon your temples. Or, perhaps, he has put that hand yet more heavily upon it, and now your bare head is exposed to the rays of the sun, and, remember, this is but a type of the exposure

of your bare soul to the stroke of Death. What signs have we all had in our bodies, especially the aged, the infirm, the consumptive, and the maimed? What mean those lungs that are so soon exhausted of their breathing if you travel up a flight of stairs to your bed? Why is it you need your optic glasses to your eyes, but that they that look out of the windows are darkened? Why that affected hearing? Why that failure of the voice, that weakness of the entire body, that accumulation of the flesh, or that prominence of the bones and leanness of the body? What are all these but stabs from the hand of Death? They are, if I may say so, his warrants which he presents to you, summoning you in a little time to meet him in another place, to do your last work, and take your last farewell. Oh! if we would but look at ourselves, we bear Death's signs and tokens about us in every part of our body.

But some of us have had yet more solemn warnings than these. If these suffice not, Death gives us a more thundering sermon. It is but a little while ago with me since Death, with his axe, seemed to be felling my tree. How the chips flew about me and covered the ground! It is a marvel to myself that I am here. Brought to Death's door, till the mind became distracted, and the body weakened, so that one could scarce stand upright, and yet again recovered. Still spared, and yet alive. You have had fever, cholera it may be. You have been stretched on your bed time after time; and each time the branch has creaked and bent almost double, till we have said, "Surely, it must snap." As a bowing wall have we been, and as a tottering fence; down it must come, so we thought; for a rough hand was shaking it, and moving us to and fro. There was not a pillar that stood firm. There was not a beam or rafter that did not quiver. We said, in the bitterness of our soul, "My days are cut off, and I shall go down to my tomb before my time." Well, man, and yet you are living in sin, as careless and unconcerned as you were before. Remember, if you will not hear Death's tongue, you shall feel his dart. If you will not think of God when he gives you a warning from a distance, you shall be made to feel God, for "he shall tear you in pieces, and none shall deliver." Methinks I see, this morning, Death fitting his arrow to the bow.

He is drawing it, pulling it tighter, and tighter still; and the marvel is that he can hold the arrow in his hand so long. "Shall it fly?" saith Death; "shall I let fly at yon wretch's heart? he will not repent; let me cut him off, and send him to his destruction." But the Lord saith, "Spare him yet a little longer." He saith, "My Lord, let me take aim; I have bent my bow, and made it ready. So sharp is it that it would cut through bars of brass, or triple steel, to reach a human heart. My throat is thirsting after his blood. Oh, let me slay him, let him die." "No," cries the long-suffering voice of God; "spare him, spare him, spare him yet a little longer." But the time will soon arrive. Perhaps, ere that clock shall reach the half hour, it may be said in heaven, "Time is! Time was!" And then shall Death let fly; his arrow shall reach your heart; and you, falling down on earth, shall appear before the awful Judge of the quick and the dead, and receive your final sentence. And, if you are unprepared to die, oh careless sinner! what, then, will become of thee?

I have thus tried to make you think of Death's warnings, in the loss of friends, and the deaths of many abroad; moreover, in the failing of our bodies, and in the diseases which have begun to prey upon us.

III. Will you, in the last place, PICTURE YOURSELF AS DYING NOW?

Antedate for a very little while your last day. Suppose it to have come. The sun has risen. "Throw up that window! let me see that sun for the last time!—this is my last day!" The physicians whisper with one another. You catch some syllables, and you learn the sad news that the case is hopeless. Much has been done for you, but skill has its limit. "He may survive," says the physician, "perhaps another twelve hours, but I hardly expect it will be so long as that. You had better gather his friends together to see him. Telegraph for the daughter; let her come up and see her father's face for the last time in the world." Yes, and now I begin to feel that the hour is coming. They are gathering round my bed. "Farewell! to you all, a last farewell! A father bids you follow him upwards

to the skies. 'I know that my Redeemer liveth.' My hope stands fast and firm in Christ Jesus! Farewell! farewell! I commend you to him who is the Father of the fatherless and the husband of the widow." But the hour draws nearer still. And now the lips refuse to speak. We have a something to communicate—a last word to a wife. We mutter through our closed teeth, but no audible sounds are heard, no words that can be interpreted. We breathe heavily. They stay us up in the bed with pillows. And now we begin to understand that expression of the hymn, "The cracking of the eyestrings." We cannot see. Strange to say, we have eyes still, but we cannot see. If we want anything, we must feel about us for it; but, no, we cannot lift our hands. They begin to hang down. We can still hear, and hear them whispering the question, "Is he dead?" One of them says, "I think there is still a little breath." They come very near and try to hear us breathing. What must our sensations be in that solemn moment! There is a hush now in the room. The watch alone is heard ticking, as the last sands drop from the hour-glass. The last moment is come. My soul is severed from my body. And where am I now—a naked, disembodied spirit? My soul, if thy hope be sound and real, thou art now where thou hast longed to be; thou art in the presence of thy Saviour and thy God. Thou art now brother to the angels. Thou standest in the mid-blaze of the splendor of divinity. Thou seest Him, whom having not seen, thou hast loved; in whom believing, thou hast rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Ah, but there is another picture the reverse of this; I cannot attempt to draw it; I will give *you* but the rough outline. Yes, you are dying; and bad as you have been, you have some that love you, and they gather round you. You cannot speak to them. Alas! you tell them more than if you could speak, for they see in your face that clammy sweat, those staring eyes. They see tokens that you have a vision of a something which would not bear to be revealed. You try to be composed; you quiet yourself. The doctor assists you to be damned easily; he drugs you, helps to send you to sleep. And now you feel that you are expiring. Your soul is filled with terror. Black

horrors and thick darkness gather round you. *Your* eyestrings break. *Your* flesh and your heart fail. But there is no kind angel to whisper, "Peace, be still." No convoy of cherubim to bear your soul away straight to yonder worlds of joy. You feel that the dart of death is a poisoned dart; that you have begun to feel the wrath of God before you enter upon the state where you shall feel it to the full. Ah, I will not describe what has happened.

As your minister, it may be, I shall have to come up and see you in your last extremity, and I shall have to say to the mother, to the children, to your brothers and to your sisters, "Well, well, we must leave this in the hands of a Covenant God." I must speak as gently as I can, but I shall go away with the reflection, "Oh that he had been wise, that he had understood this, that he had considered his latter end." My heart, as I go down the stairs, shall ask me this question: "Was I faithful to this man? did I tell him honestly the way to heaven? if he is lost, will his blood be required at my hands?" I know that, with regard to some of you, the answer of my conscience will be, "I have preached as well as I possibly could the Word of God; not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but with a desire to be simple and to come home to the heart. I must leave the matter there. If they are lost, oh, horror of horrors! I am clear of their blood." My hearers, I hope it will not be so with you, but that each one of you, dying, may have a hope; and rising again, may possess immortality, and ascend to the throne of my Father and of your Father, to my God and to your God.

And, now, if there is any impression upon your minds, any serious thought, let me send you away with this one sentence. The way of salvation is plain: "He that believeth and is baptised, shall be saved; he that believeth not, shall be damned." Believe—that is, trust—trust the Lord Jesus and thou shalt be saved. May God the Holy Spirit enable you to trust him *now*, for with some of you—and mark this last sentence—with some of you it is NOW OR NEVER. AMEN.

SERMON IX.

MARKS OF FAITH.

[All aids by which a true Evangelical faith may be distinguished, will be of special value particularly to inexperienced or doubtful Christians. This discourse groups plain practical characteristics and illustrations of faith, in an admirable manner. It was preached at Exeter Hall, May 27, 1860, and is one of several of which the author says: "They have all sounded as the silver trumpet of jubilee in the ears of bankrupt sinners."]

"Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe."—John, iv. 48.

You will remember that Luke, in his letter to Theophilus, speaks of things which Jesus began both *to do* and *to teach*, as if there was a connection between his doings and his teachings. In fact, there *was* a relation of the most intimate kind. His teachings were the explanation of his doings—his doings confirmations of his teachings. Jesus Christ had never occasion to say, "Do as I say, but not as I do." His words and his actions were in perfect harmony with one another. You might be sure that he was honest in what he *said*, because what he *did* forced that conviction upon your mind. Moreover, you were led to see that what he taught you must be true because he spoke with authority,—an authority proved and demonstrated by the miracles he wrought.

Oh my brethren in Christ! when our biographies shall come to be written at last, God grant that they may not be all say-

ings, but that they may be a history of our sayings and doings! And may the good Spirit so dwell in us, that at the last it may be seen that our doings did not clash with our sayings! It is one thing to preach, but another thing to practice; and unless preaching and practice go together, the preacher is himself condemned, and his ill practice may be the means of condemning multitudes through his leading them astray. If you make a profession of being God's servant, live up to that profession, and if you think it necessary to exhort others to virtue, take care that you set the example. You can have no right to teach, if you have not yourself learned the lesson which you would teach to others.

Thus much by way of preface; and now concerning the subject itself. The narrative before us seems to me to suggest three points, and those points each of them triplets. I shall notice in this narrative, first, the *three stages of faith;* in the second place the *three diseases to which faith is subject;* and, in the third place, to ask *three questions about your faith.*

I. To begin, then, with the first point. FAITH IN THREE OF ITS STAGES.

Doubtless, the history of faith might with propriety be divided just as accurately into five or six different states of growth; but our narrative suggests a threefold division, and therefore we stand to that this morning.

There is a nobleman living at Capernaum; he hears a rumor that a celebrated prophet and preacher is continually going through the cities of Galilee and Judea, and is given to understand that this mighty preacher does not merely charm every hearer by his eloquence, but wins the hearts of men by singularly benevolent miracles which he works as a confirmation of his mission. He stores these things in his heart, little thinking that they would ever be of any practical service to him. It comes to pass on a certain day that his son falls sick,—perhaps his only son, one very dear to his father's heart—the sickness, instead of diminishing, gradually increases. Fever breathes its hot breath upon the child, and seems to dry up all the moisture in his body, and to blast the bloom from his cheek. The father con-

sults every physician within his reach; they look upon the child and candidly pronounce him hopeless. No cure can possibly be wrought. That child is at the point of death; the arrow of death has almost sunk into his flesh; it has well nigh penetrated his heart; he is not near death merely, but at death's very point; he has been forced by disease upon the barbed arrows of that insatiate archer. The father now bethinks himself, and calls to recollection the stories he had heard of the cures wrought by Jesus of Nazareth. There is a little faith in his soul; though but a little, still enough to make him use every endeavor to test the truth of what he has heard.

Jesus Christ has come to Cana again; it is some fifteen or twenty miles. The father travels with all speed; he arrives at the place where Jesus is; his faith has got to such a stage that, as soon as he sees the Master, he begins to cry, "Lord, come down ere my child die." The Master, instead of giving him an answer which might console him, rebukes him for the littleness of his faith, and tells him, "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." The man, however, pays little regard to the rebuke, for there is a desire which has absorbed all the powers of his soul. "Sir," said he, "come down ere my child die." His faith has now arrived at such a stage that he pleads in prayer, and earnestly importunes the Lord to come and heal his son. The Master looks upon him with an eye of ineffable benevolence, and says to him, "Go thy way; thy son liveth." The father goes his way cheerfully, quickly, contentedly, trusting in the word which as yet no evidence has confirmed. He has now come to the second stage of his faith, he has come out of the seeking stage into the relying stage. He no more cries and pleads for a thing he has not; he trusts and believes that the thing is given to him, though as yet he has not perceived the gift. On his road home, the servants meet him with joyful haste; they say, "Master, thy son liveth." He enquires quickly at what hour the fever left him. The answer is given him,—about the seventh hour the fever abated; nay, it stayed its course. Then he comes to the third stage. He goes home; he sees his child perfectly restored. The child springs into his arms, covers him with kisses and when he has held him up

again and again to see if he was really the little one that lay so wan, and pale, and sick, he triumphs in a higher sense still His faith has gone from reliance up to full assurance; and then his whole house believed as well as himself.

I have given you just these outlines of the narrative, that you may see the three stages of faith. Let us now examine each more minutely.

When faith begins in the soul, it is but as a grain of mustard seed. God's people are not born giants. They are babes at first; and as they are babes in grace, so their graces are as it were in their infancy. Faith is but as a little child, when first God gives it; or to use another figure, it is not a fire, but a spark, a spark which seems as if it must go out, but which is nevertheless fanned and kept alive until it cometh to a flame, like unto the vehement heat of Nebuchadnezzar's furnace. The poor man in the narrative, when he had faith given him, he had it but in a very small degree. It was *seeking faith*. That is the first stage of faith. Now just notice that this seeking faith excited his activity. As soon as ever God gives a man the seeking faith, he is no more idle about religion; he does not fold his arms with the wicked Antinomian, and cry, "If I am to be saved, I shall be saved, and I will sit still, for if I am to be damned, I shall be damned." He is not careless and indifferent, as he used to be, as to whether he should go up to the house of God or no. He has got seeking faith, and that faith makes him attend the means of grace, leads him to search the Word, leads him to be diligent in the use of every ordained means of blessing for the soul. There is a sermon to be heard: no matter that there are five miles to walk, seeking faith puts wings upon the feet. There is a congregation where God is blessing souls; the man, if he enters, will probably have to stand in the crowd; but it does not signify, seeking faith gives him strength to bear the uneasiness of his position, for, "Oh," he says, "if I *may* but hear the Word." See how he leans forward that he may not lose a syllable, for, "Perhaps," saith he, "the sentence that I lose may be the very one that I want." How earnest he is that he may not only be sometimes in the house of God, but very often there He becomes amongst the most enthusiastic of hearers,

the most earnest of men that attend that place of worship. Seeking faith gives a man activity.

More than this, seeking faith, though it is very weak in some things, gives a man great power in prayer. How earnest was this nobleman—"Lord, come down ere my child die." Ay, and when seeking faith enters into the soul, it makes a man pray. He is not content now with muttering over a few words when he rises in the morning, and then, half asleep, ringing the same chimes at night when he goes to bed; but he gets away—he steals a quarter of an hour from his business if he can, that he may cry to God in secret. He has not the faith yet which enables him to say, "My sins are forgiven;" but he has faith enough to know that Christ *can* forgive his sins, and what he wants is that he may know that *his* sins are really cast behind Jehovah's back. Sometimes this man has no convenience for prayer, but seeking faith will make him pray in a garret, in a hay-loft, in a saw-pit, from behind a hedge, or even walking the street. Satan may throw a thousand difficulties in the way, but seeking faith will compel a man to knock at Mercy's door. Now the faith that you have received doth not yet give you peace, it doth not put you where there is no condemnation, but yet it is such a faith, that if it grows it will come to that. It has but to be nourished, to be cherished, to be exercised, and the little one shall become mighty, seeking faith shall come to a higher degree of development, and you that knocked at Mercy's gate shall enter in and find a welcome at Jesus' table.

And I would have you further notice, that the seeking faith in this man's case did not simply make him earnest in prayer, but importunate in it. He asked once, and the only answer he received was an apparent rebuff. He did not turn away offended, and say, "He rebukes me." No. "Sir," saith he, "come down ere my child die." I cannot tell you how he said it, but I have no doubt it was expressed in soul moving terms, with tears starting from his eyes, with hands that were placed together in the attitude of entreaty. He seemed to say, "I cannot let thee go except thou come and save my child. Oh, do come. Is there any thing I can say that can induce thee? Let a father's affection be my best argument; and if my lips be not eloquent, let the tears

of my eyes supply the place of the words of my tongue. Come down, ere my child die." And oh! what mighty prayers those are which seeking faith will make a man pray! I have heard the seeker sometimes plead with God with all the power that Jacob ever could have had at Jabbok's brook. I have seen the sinner under distress of soul seem to take hold of the pillars of the gate of mercy, and rock them to and fro as though he would sooner pull them up from their deep foundations than go away without effecting an entrance. I have seen him pull and tug, and strive and fight, and wrestle, rather than not enter the kingdom of heaven, for he knew that the kingdom of heaven suffered violence, and the violent would take it by force. No wonder that you have not any peace, if you have been bringing before God your cold prayers. Heat them red-hot in the furnace of desire, or think not they will ever burn their way upwards to heaven. You that merely say in the chill form of orthodoxy, "God be merciful to me a sinner," will never find mercy. It is the man that cries in the burning anguish of heart-felt emotion—"God be merciful to *me* a sinner; save *me* or I perish," that gains his suit. It is he who concentrates his soul in every word, and flings the violence of his being into every sentence, that wins his way through the gates of heaven. Seeking faith, when once it is given, can make a man do this. Doubtless there are some here who have got as far as that already. I thought I saw the tears starting from many an eye, just now brushed away very hastily, but I could see it as an index that some said in their souls, "Ay, I know the meaning of that, and I trust God has brought me thus far."

One word I must say here with regard to the weakness of this seeking faith. It can do much, but it makes many mistakes. The fault of seeking faith is, that it knows too little, for you will observe that this poor man said, "Sir, *come down*." Well, but he need not come down. The Lord can work the miracle without coming down. But our poor friend thought the Master could not save his son, unless he came and looked at him, and put his hand upon him, and knelt down perhaps upon him as Elijah did. "Oh, come down," saith he. So is it with you. You have been dictating to God how he shall save you. You want him

to send you some terrible convictions, and then you think you could believe; or else, you want to have a dream or a vision, or to hear a voice speaking to you, saying, "Son, thy sins are forgiven thee." That is your fault, you see. Your seeking faith is strong enough to make you pray, but it is not strong enough to cast out of the mind your own silly fancies. You are wanting to see signs and wonders, or else you will not believe. Oh nobleman, if Jesus chooses to speak the word and thy son is healed, will not that suit thee as well as his coming down? "Oh," saith he, "I never thought of that!" and so poor sinner, if Jesus chooses to give thee peace this morning in this hall, will not that suit thee as well as being a month under the whip of the law? If, as you pass out of these doors, you be enabled simply to trust in Christ, and so find peace, will not that be as good a salvation as though you should have to go through fire and through water, and all your sins should be made to ride over your head? Here, then, is the weakness of your faith. Though there is much excellence in it, because it makes you pray, there is some fault in it because it makes you imprudently prescribe to the Almighty how he shall bless you—makes you in effect to impugn his sovereignty, and leads you ignorantly to dictate to him in what form the promised boon shall come.

We will now pass on to the *second* stage of faith. The Master stretched out his hand, and said, "Go thy way, thy son liveth." Do you see the face of that nobleman? Those furrows that were there seem smoothed in a moment, all gone. Those eyes are full of tears, but they are of another sort now—they are tears of joy. He claps his hands, retires silently, his heart ready to burst with gratitude, his whole soul full of confidence. "Why are you so happy, sir?" "Why, my child is cured," saith he. "Nay, but you have not seen him cured." "But my Lord said he was, and I believe him." "But it may be that when you get home you will find your faith to be a delusion and your child a corpse." "Nay," saith he, "I believe in that man. Once I believed him and sought him, now I believe him and have found him." "But you have no evidence whatever that your child is healed." "Nay," saith he, "I do not want any. The naked word of that divine prophet is enough for me. He spake it, and I

know it is true. He told me to go my way; my son lived; I go my way, and I am quite at peace and at ease." Now mark, when your faith gets to a second stage in which you shall be able to take Christ at his word, then it is you shall begin to know the happiness of believing, and then it is your faith saves your soul. Take Christ at his word, poor sinner. "He that believeth on the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved." "But," saith one, "I feel no evidence." Believe it none the less for that. "But," says another, "I do not feel enjoyment in my heart." Believe it, be your heart never so gloomy, that enjoyment shall come afterwards. That is an heroic faith which believes Christ in the teeth of a thousand contradictions. When the Lord gives you that faith, you can say, "I consult not with flesh and blood. He who said to me, 'Believe and be saved,' gave me grace to believe, and I therefore am confident that I am saved. When I once cast my soul, sink or swim, upon the love, and blood, and power of Christ, though conscience give no witness to my soul, though doubts distress me, and fears plague me, yet it is mine to honor my Master by believing his Word, though it be contradictory to sense, though reason rebel against it, and present feeling dare to give it the lie.' Oh! it is an honorable thing when a man has a follower, and that follower believes that man implicitly. The man propounds an opinion which is in contradiction to the received opinion of the universe; he stands up and addresses it to the people, and they hiss and hoot, and scorn him; but that man has one disciple, who says, "I believe my Master; what he has said I believe is true." There is something noble in the man who receives such homage as that. He seems to say, "Now I am master of one heart, at least;" and when you, in the teeth of everything that is conflicting, stand to Christ and believe his words, you do him greater homage than Cherubim and Seraphim before the throne. Dare to believe; trust Christ, I say, and thou art saved.

In this stage of faith it is that a man begins to enjoy quietness and peace of mind. I am not quite certain as to the number of miles between Cana and Capernaum, but several excellent expositors say it is fifteen, some twenty. I suppose the miles may have altered in their length lately. It need not, however, have

taken this good man long to get home to his son. It was at the seventh hour that the Master said, "Thy son liveth." It is evident from this text, that he did not meet his servants till the next day, because they say, "Yesterday, at the seventh hour, the fever left him." What do you conclude from that? Why, I draw this inference: the nobleman was so sure that his child was alive and well, that he was in no violent hurry to return. He did not go home immediately, as though he must be in time to get another doctor, if Christ had not succeeded; but he went his way leisurely and calmly, confident in the truth of what Jesus had said to him. Well, says an old father of the church, "He that believeth shall not make haste." In this case it was true. The man took his time. He was, it may be, twelve hours or more before he reached his home—though probably it was but fifteen miles for him to travel. He who takes the naked word of Christ to be the basis of his hope, stands on a rock while all other ground is sinking sand. My brothers and sisters, some of you have got as far as this. You are now taking Christ at his word; it shall not be long before you will get to the third and best stage of faith. But if it should be ever so long, still stand here; still believe your Lord and Master; still trust him. If he does not take you into his banqueting house, still trust him Nay, if he locks you up in the castle, or in the dungeon, still trust him. Say, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him." Should he let the arrows of affliction stick fast in your flesh, still trust him; should he break you to pieces with his right hand, still trust him; and by-and-bye your righteousness shall come forth as the light, your glory as a lamp that burneth.

We must now hurry on to the *third* and best stage of faith. The servants meet the nobleman—his son is healed. He arrives at home, clasps his child, and sees him perfectly restored. And now, says the narrative,—"Himself believed, and his whole house." And yet, you will have noticed that in the fiftieth verse, it says that he believed. "The man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him." Now, some expositors have been greatly puzzled, for they did not know when this man did believe. Good Calvin says—and his remarks are always weighty, and always excellent—Calvin says, this man had, in the first place, only a

faith which relied for one thing upon Christ. He believed the word Christ had spoken. Afterwards he had a faith which took Christ into his soul, to become his disciple, and trust him as the Messiah. I think I am not wrong in using this as an illustration of faith in its highest state. He found his son healed at the very hour when Jesus said he should be. "And now," he says, "I believe;" that is to say, he believed with full assurance of faith. His mind was so rid of all its doubts; he believed in Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ of God; sure he was a prophet sent from God, and doubts and misgivings no longer occupied his soul. Ah! I know many poor creatures who want to get up to this state, but they want to get there all at first. They are like a man who wants to get up a ladder without going up the lowest rounds. "Oh," they say, "if I had the full assurance of faith, then I should believe I am a child of God." No, no; believe, trust in Christ's naked word, and then you shall come afterwards to feel in your soul the witness of the Spirit that you are born of God. Assurance is a flower—you must plant the bulb first, the naked, perhaps unseemly, bulb of faith—plant it in the grain, and you shall have the flower by-and-bye. The shrivelled seed of a little faith springs upwards, and then you have the ripe corn in the ear of full assurance of faith. But here I want you to notice, that when this man came to full assurance of faith, it is said his house believed too.

There is a text often quoted, and I do not think I have heard it quoted rightly yet. By the way, there are some people who know no more of authors than what they hear quoted, and some who know no more of the Bible than what they hear quoted too. Now, there is that passage, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."—What have the last three words done that they should be cut off?—"And thy house;" those three words seem to me to be as precious as the first. "Believe and thou shalt be saved and thy house." Does the father's faith save the family? Yes! No!—*Yes*, it does in some way; namely, that the father's faith makes him pray for his family, and God hears his prayer, and the family is saved. *No*, the father's faith cannot be a substitute for the faith of the children, they must believe too. In both senses of the word, I say, "Yes, or No."

When a man has believed, there is hope that his children will be saved. Nay, there is a promise; and the father ought not to rest satisfied until he sees all his children saved. If he does, he has not believed right yet. There are many men who only believe for themselves. I like, if I get a promise, to believe it as broad as it is. Why should not my faith be as broad as the promise? Now, thus it stands: "Believe and thou shalt be saved, and thy house!" I have a claim on God for my little ones.

When I go before God in prayer, I can plead, "Lord, I believe, and thou hast said I shall be saved, and my house; thou hast saved me, but thou hast not fulfilled thy promise till thou hast saved my house too." I know it is sometimes thought that we who believe the baptism of infants to be a heresy, neglect our children. But could there have been a greater slander? Why, instead thereof, we think we are doing our children the greatest service that we can possibly do them, when teaching them that they are not members of Christ's church, that they are not made Christians in the day that they are christened, that they must be born again, and that that new birth must be in them a thing which they can consciously realize, and not a thing we can do for them in their babyhood, while they are yet in their long clothes, by sprinkling a handful of water in their faces. We think they are far more likely to be converted than those who are brought up in the delusive notion taught them in that expression of the catechism—a most wicked, blasphemous, and false expression—"In my baptism wherein I was made a member of Christ, a child of God, an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." The Pope of Rome never uttered a sentence more unholy than that; never said a syllable more contradictory to the whole tenor of God's Word. Children are not saved by baptism. "He that *believeth* shall be saved; and he that *believeth* and is *baptized* shall be saved,"—but the baptism precedes not the belief. Nor doth it co-act or co-work in our salvation, for salvation is a work of grace, laid hold of by faith and faith alone. Baptized or unbaptized, if you believe not, you are lost; but unbaptized, if you believe, you are saved. And our children dying in their infancy, without any unhallowed or superstitious rite, are saved, notwithstanding.

II. And now we come to the second department of our subject, the THREE DISEASES TO WHICH FAITH IS VERY SUBJECT, and these three diseases break out in different stages.

First, with regard to seeking faith. The power of seeking faith lies in its driving a man to prayer. And here is the disease; for we are very likely, when we are seeking to begin, to suspend prayerfulness. How often does the devil whisper in a man's ear, "Do not pray, it is of no use. You know you will be shut out of heaven!" Or, when the man thinks he has got an answer to prayer, then Satan says, "You need not pray any more; you have got what you asked for." Or, if after a month of crying he has received a blessing, then Satan whispers, "Fool that thou art, to tarry at Mercy's gate. Get gone! get gone! That gate is nailed up and barred fast, and you will never be heard." Oh, my friends! if you are subject to this disease while seeking Christ, I bid you cry against it, and labor against it; never cease to pray. A man can never sink in the river of wrath so long as ever he can cry. So long as ever you can cry to God for mercy, mercy shall never withdraw itself from you.

Oh! let not Satan push you back from the closet door, but push in, whether he will or not. Give up prayer, and you seal your own damnation; renounce secret supplication, and you renounce Christ and heaven. Continue in prayer, and though the blessing tarry, it must come; in God's own time it must appear to you.

The disease which is most likely to fall upon those in the *second* stage—namely, those who are trusting implicitly on Christ—is the disease of wanting to see signs and wonders, or else they will not believe. In the early stage of my ministry, in the midst of a rural population, I used to meet continually with persons who thought they were Christians because, as they imagined, they had seen signs and wonders; and since then, stories the most ridiculous have been told me by earnest and sincere people, as reasons why they thought they were saved. I have heard a narrative something like this:—"I believe my sins are put away." Why! "Well, sir, I was down in the back garden and I saw a great cloud, and I thought, now God can

make that cloud go away if he pleases, and it did go away: and I thought the cloud and my sins were gone too, and I have not had a doubt since then." I thought, Well, you have good reason to doubt, for that is totally absurd. Were I to tell you the whims and fancies that some people get into their heads, you might smile, and that might not be to your profit. Certain it is, that men patch up any idle story, any strange fancy, in order to make them think that they may then trust Christ. Oh! my dear friends, if you have no better reason to believe you are in Christ than a dream or a vision, it is time you began again. I grant you there have been some who have been alarmed, convinced, and perhaps converted, by strange freaks of their imagination; but if you rely on these as being pledges from God, if you look on these as being evidences that you are saved, I tell you that you will be resting on a dream, a delusion. You may as well seek to build a castle in the air, or a house upon the sands.

No, he who believes Christ, believes Christ because he says it, and because here it is written in the Word; he does not believe it because he dreamed it, or because he heard a voice that might probably be a blackbird singing, or because he thought he saw an angel in the sky, which was just as likely to be mist of a peculiar shape as anything else. No, we must have done with this desire to see signs and wonders. If they come, be thankful; if they come not, trust simply in the Word, which says, "All manner of sin shall be forgiven unto men." I do not wish to say this to hurt any tender conscience, which conscience may perhaps have found some little comfort in such singular wonders: but I only say this honestly, lest any of you should be deceived: I do solemnly warn you to place no reliance whatever on anything you think you have seen, or dreamed, or heard. This volume is the sure word of testimony, unto which ye do well if ye take heed, as unto a light which shineth in a dark place. Trust in the Lord; wait patiently for him; cast all thy confidence where he put all thy sins, namely, upon Christ Jesus alone, and thou shalt be saved, with or without any of these signs and wonders.

I am afraid some Christians have fallen into the same error of

wanting to see signs and wonders. They have been meeting together in special prayer-meetings to seek for a revival; and because people have not dropped down in a fainting fit, and have not screamed and made a noise, perhaps they have thought the revival has not come. Oh that we had but eyes to see God's gifts in the way God chooses to give them! We do not want the revival of the north of Ireland; we want the revival in its goodness, but not in that particular shape. If the Lord sends it in another, we shall be all the more glad to be without these exceptional works in the flesh. Where the Spirit works in the soul, we are always glad to see true conversion; and if he chooses to work in the body too, we shall be glad to see it. If men's hearts are renewed, what matter it though they do not scream out. If their consciences are quickened, what matters it though they do not fall into a fit; if they do but find Christ, who is to regret that they do not lie for five or six weeks motionless and senseless? Take it without the signs and wonders. For my part, I have no craving for them. Let me see God's work done in God's own way—a true and thorough revival, but the signs and wonders we can readily dispense with, for they are certainly not demanded by the faithful, and they will only be the laughing-stock of the faithless.

Having thus spoken of these two diseases, I will only just mention the other. There is a *third*, then, which lies in the way of our attaining the highest degree of faith, namely, full assurance, and that is, *want of observation*. The nobleman in our text made careful inquiries about the day and the hour when his son was healed. It was by that he obtained his assurance. But we do not observe God's hand as much as we should. Our good puritanic forefathers, when it rained, used to say, that God had unstopped the bottles of heaven. When it rains now-a-days, we think the clouds have become condensed. If they had a field of hay cut, they used to plead of the Lord that he would bid the sun shine. We, perhaps, are wiser, as we think; and we consider it hardly worth while to pray about such things, thinking they will come in the course of nature. They believed that God was in every storm; nay, in every cloud of dust. They used to speak of a present God in everything; but we speak of such

things as laws of nature, as if laws were ever anything, except there was some one to carry them out, and some secret power to set the whole machinery in motion. We do not get our assurance, because we do not observe enough. If you were to watch providential goodness day by day; if you noticed the answers to your prayers; if you would just put down somewhere in the book of your remembrance God's continued mercies towards *you*, I do think you would become like this father who was led to full assurance of faith, because he noticed that the very hour when Jesus spoke, was the very hour when the healing came. Be watchful, Christian. He that looks for providences will never lack a providence to look at.

Take heed then of these *three* diseases; *of ceasing from prayer; waiting to see signs and wonders;* and *neglect of observing the manifest hand of God.*

III. And now I come to my third and last head, upon which solemnly, though briefly, there are THREE QUESTIONS TO BE ADDRESSED TO YOU ABOUT YOUR FAITH.

First, then, thou sayest, "I have faith." Be it so. There be many a man who saith he hath gold that hath it not; there be many that think themselves rich and increased in goods, that are naked, and poor, and miserable. I say unto thee, therefore, in the first place, does thy faith make thee *pray?* Not the praying of the man who prates like a parrot the prayers he has learned; but dost thou cry the cry of a living child? Dost thou tell to God thy wants and thy desires? And dost thou *seek* his face, and *ask* his mercy? Man, if thou livest without prayer, thou art a Christless soul; thy faith is a delusion, and thy confidence which results from it, is a dream that will destroy thee. Wake up out of thy death-like slumbers; for as long as thou art dumb in prayer, God cannot answer thee. Thou shalt not live to God, if thou dost not live in the closet; he that is never on his knees on earth, shall never stand upon his feet in heaven; he that never wrestles with the angel here below, shall never be admitted into heaven by that angel above.

I know I speak to some to-day that are prayerless ones. You have plenty of time for your counting-house, but you have none

for your closet. Family prayer you have never had; but I will not talk to you about that. Private prayer you have neglected. Do you not sometimes rise in the morning so near the time when you must keep your appointments, that—you do kneel it is true; but where is the prayer? And as to any extra occasions of supplication, why, you never indulge yourselves in them. Prayer with you, is a sort of luxury too dear to indulge in often. Ah! but he who has true faith in his heart, is praying all day long. I do not mean that he is on his knees; but often when he is bargaining, when he is in his shop, or in his counting-house, his heart finds a little space, a vacuum for a moment, and up it leaps into the bosom of its God, and it is down again, refreshed to go about its business and meet the face of man. Oh! those ejaculatory prayers—not merely filling the censer in the morning with incense, but that casting in of little bits of cinnamon and frankincense all day long, so as always to keep it fresh—that is the way to live, and that is the life of a true genuine believer. If your faith does not make you pray, have nothing to do with it; get rid of it, and God help thee to begin again.

But thou sayest, "I have faith." I will ask thee a second question. Does that faith make thee *obedient?* Jesus said to the nobleman, "Go thy way," and he went without a word; however much he might have wished to stay and listen to the Master, he obeyed. Does your faith make you obedient? In these days we have specimens of Christians of the most sorry, sorry kind. I have heard it observed by tradesmen, that they know many men that have not the fear of God before their eyes, that are most just and upright men in their dealings; and on the other hand, they know some professing Christians, who are not positively dishonest, but they can back and hedge a little; they do not seem to keep up to the time if they have a bill to pay; they are not regular, they are not exact; in fact, sometimes—and who shall hide what is true?—you catch Christians doing dirty actions, and professors of religion defiling themselves with acts which merely worldly men would scorn. Now, sirs, I bear my testimony this morning as God's minister, too honest to alter a word to please any man that lives, you are no Christian if you can act in business beneath the dignity of an honest man. If

God has not made you honest, he has not saved your soul. Rest assured that if you can go on, disobedient to the moral laws of God, if your life is inconsistent and lascivious, if your conversation is mixed up with things which even a worldling might reject, the love of God is not in you. I do not plead for perfection, but I do plead for honesty; and if your religion has not made you careful and prayerful in common life; if you are not in fact made a new creature in Christ Jesus; your faith is but an empty name, as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

I will ask you one more question about your faith, and I have done. Thou sayest, "I have faith." Has thy faith led thee to bless thy household? Good Rowland Hill once said, in his own quaint way, that when a man became a Christian, his dog and his cat ought to be the better for it; and I think it was Mr. Jay who always would say, that a man, when he became a Christian was better in every relation. He was a better husband, a better master, a better father, than he was before, or else his religion was not genuine. Now, have you ever thought, my dear Christian brethren, about blessing your household? Do I hear one saying, "I keep my religion to myself." Do not be very anxious about its ever being stolen, then; you need not put it under lock and key; there is not enough to tempt the devil himself to come and take it from you. A man who can keep his godliness to himself, has so small a proportion of it, I am afraid it will be no credit to himself, and no blessing to other people.

But you do sometimes, strange to say, meet with fathers that do not seem as if they interested themselves in their children's salvation, any more than they do about poor children in the back slums of St. Giles's. They would like to see the boy put out well, and they would like to see the girl married comfortably; but as to their being converted, it does not seem to trouble their heads. It is true the father occupies his seat in a house of worship, and sits down with a community of Christians; and he *hopes* his children may turn out well. They have the benefit of his hope—certainly a very large legacy: he will no doubt when he dies leave them his best wishes, and may they grow rich upon them! But he never seems to have made it a matter of anxiety of soul, as to whether they shall be saved or not. Out

upon such a religion as that! Cast it on the dunghill; hurl it to the dogs; let it be buried like Koniah, with the burial of an ass; cast it without the camp, like an unclean thing. It is not the religion of God. He that careth not for his own household, is worse than a heathen man and a publican.

Never be content, my brethren in Christ, till all your children are saved. Lay the promise before your God. The promise is unto you and unto your children. The Greek word does not refer to infants, but to children, grand-children, and any descendants you may have, whether grown up or not. Do not cease to plead till not only your children, but your great grand-children, if you have such, are saved. I stand here to-day a proof that God is not untrue to his promise. I can cast my eye back through four or five generations, and see that God has been pleased to hear the prayers of our grandfather's grandfather, who used to supplicate with God that his children might live before him to the last generation, and God has never deserted the house, but has been pleased to bring first one, and then another, to fear and love his name. So be it with you: and in asking this, you are not asking more than God is ready to give you. He cannot refuse unless he run back from his promise. He cannot refuse to give you both your own and your children's souls as an answer to the prayer of your faith. "Ah," says one, "but you do not know what children mine are." No, my dear friend, but I know that if you are a Christian, they are children that God has promised to bless. "O, but they are such unruly ones, they break my heart." Then pray God to break their hearts, and they will not break your heart any more. "But they will bring my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave." Pray God then, that he may bring their eyes with sorrow to prayer, and to supplication, and to the cross, and then they will not bring you to the grave. "But," you say, "my children have such hard hearts." Look at your own. You think they cannot be saved: look at yourselves; he that saved you can save them. Go to him in prayer, and say, "Lord, I will not let thee go except thou bless me;" and if thy child be at the point of death, and, as you think, at the point of damnation on account of sin, still plead like the nobleman, "Lord, come down ere my child perish, and save me for

thy mercy's sake." And oh, thou that dwellest in the highest heavens thou wilt ne'er refuse thy people. Be it far from us to dream that thou wilt forget thy promise. In the name of all thy people, we put our hand upon thy Word most solemnly, and pledge thee to thy covenant. Thou hast said thy mercy is unto the children's children of them that fear thee and keep thy commandments. Thou hast said the promise is unto us and unto our children; Lord, thou wilt not deny thine own covenant; we challenge thy word by holy faith this morning—"Do as thou hast said." AMEN.

SERMON X.

THE PRECIOUS FROM THE VILE.

[This discourse, delivered in Exeter Hall, March 25, 1860, must have been as a keen sword in the soldier's hand, wounding sorely, or savingly, many who listened to it. Its pictures are truthful; its exposures painful, but just; its denunciations of hypocrisy and false pretense, most severe. Its perusal may be less pleasant than many others; but its wounds are those of a friend. Its wide range of topic enlarges the field of its usefulness.]

"That ye may know how that the Lord hath put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel."—EXODUS, xi. 7.

THE difference between the Egyptians and the Israelites was exceedingly manifest. At first sight it seemed to be very greatly to the advantage of the Egyptians. They had the whip in their hand, and poor Israel smarted under the lash. Egypt possessed the toil of the Israelites, the sons of Jacob made bricks, and the subjects of Pharaoh inhabited the houses which the sons of Jacob builded. How soon, however, were the tables turned! God wrought plagues in Egypt; but Goshen was spared. He sent a thick darkness over all the land, even darkness that might be felt; but in all the land of Goshen there was light. He sent all manner of flies and lice in all their borders; but throughout the habitations of Israel not a fly was to be seen, neither were they molested. The Lord sent hail and a murrain

upon all the cattle of the Egyptians; but the cattle of the children of Israel were spared, and on their fields fell no desolating shower from heaven. At last the destroying angel unsheathed his glittering sword to strike his last decisive blow. In every house throughout the land of Egypt there was weeping and wailing; he smote the first-born of Egypt, the chief of all their strength; but as for his people, he led them forth like sheep, he led them through the wilderness like a flock, by the hand of Moses and Aaron. They came to the Red Sea, and he made a path for them; they went through the sea on foot, there did they rejoice in him. The floods stood upright as a heap, and the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea. They passed through the depths as through a wilderness, which the Egyptians essaying to do were drowned. The Lord, in all these things, put a glorious difference between Egypt and Israel. The fiery cloudy pillar which gave light to Israel was darkness to the eyes of Egypt. Whenever God blessed Israel, he cursed Egypt; the same moment that he sent the benediction to the one, he sent the malediction to the other; he looked on Israel and the tribes rejoiced, but when he looked on the Egyptians, their host were troubled.

Now, in your ears this day, Egypt and Israel are declared to be types of two people who dwell upon the face of the earth,—the men that fear the Lord and the men that fear him not. The Egyptians are those who are dead in trespasses and sins, enemies to God by wicked works, and aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. The Israelites, God's ancient people, are set before us as the representatives of those who have through grace believed in Christ, who fear God and keep his commandments. The task of this morning will be to show you, first, *the difference;* secondly, *when that difference is seen;* and thirdly, *the reason why it should be seen.*

I. First, then, THE DIFFERENCE. The Lord hath put a difference between those who are his people and those who are not.

There are many distinctions among men which will one day be blotted out; but permit me to remind you at the outset that this is an *eternal* distinction. Between the different classes of

men, the rich and the poor, there are channels of intercommunication, and very properly so, for the fewer class distinctions are maintained, the better for the happiness of all. The social fabric is not to be kept up by maintaining one pillar at the expense of another, or by gilding the roof, and neglecting the foundations. The commonwealth is *one*, and the prosperity of one class is proportionately the prosperity of all. But there is a distinction so wide that we may truly say of it, "Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed," and the broader the line of demarcation, the happier for the church, and the better for the world. There is a distinction of infinite width between the sinner dead in sin, and the child of God quickened by the Spirit, who has been adopted into the family of the Most High. Concerning this distinction, suffer me to make the following remarks.

First, the distinction between the righteous and wicked is *most ancient*. It was ordained of God from before the foundation of the world. In the eternal covenant Jehovah wrote the names of his elect; for them Christ entered into engagements that he would be their surety, and their substitute to suffer in their room and stead. Covenant engagements were made for *them*, and for *them only*. Their names were from of old inscribed in the book of God, and engraved upon the precious stones of their great high priest's breastplate. They were then in the covenant set apart: "The Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself." While the whole world lay in the wicked one, these precious jewels were selected from the ruins of the fall. Better than other men by nature they certainly were not; yet divine sovereignty, linked arm in arm with divine grace, selected some to be the vessels of mercy, who should be fitted for the Master's use, in whom Jehovah should show forth not his long suffering merely but the plentitude of his grace and the riches of his love. Other distinctions are merely temporary; they are things that grew up yesterday, and will die to-morrow; but this is older than the everlasting hills. Before the starry sky was spread, or the foundations of the earth were digged, the Lord had made a difference between Israel and Egypt. This, however, is a mighty secret, though we are to tell it as we find it in the Word, yet we are not intrusively to pry into it.

Second; God has made this distinction, a *vital* one. Between the righteous and the wicked, there is an essential distinction of nature. There are some of you, who imagine that the only difference between the true Christian and another, is just this,—that the one is more attentive to his place of worship—that he is more regular in the practice of ceremonies—that he could not live without private prayer, and the like. Permit me to assure you, that if there is no greater difference than this between you and another man, you are not a child of God. The distinction between the unconverted and the converted, is far wider than this. It is one not of dress or of outward form, but of essence and of nature. Bring hither a serpent and an angel: there is a distinction between the two of such a character, that the serpent could not grow into an angel, let it do its utmost, the angel could not eat the dust which forms the serpent's food, nor could the serpent lift up its voice and sing the seraphic song of the blessed. As wide a distinction as that is there between the man that fears God, and the man that fears him not. If you are still what you always were by nature, you cannot be a true Christian; and it is utterly impossible for you to grow into one by all your doings. You may wash and cleanse, you may clothe and dress; you will be the child of nature finely dressed, but not the living child of heaven.

You *must* be born again; there must be a new nature put into you; a spark of divinity must fall into your bosom, and burn there. Fallen nature can only rise to nature, just as water will only flow up as high as its source; and as you are fallen in nature, so must you remain, unless you are renewed by grace. God by his infinite power has quickened his people: he has brought them out of their old nature, they now love the things which they once hated, and they hate the things they once loved. Old things with them are "passed away; behold all things are become new." The change is not that they speak more solemnly and religiously, or that they have left off going to the theatre, or that they do not spend their lives in the frivolities of the world: that is not the change—it is a consequence of it; but the change is deeper and more vital than this; it is a change of the man's very essence. He is no more the man that he once was; he is

"renewed in the spirit of his mind," born over again, regenerated, re-created; he is a stranger and a foreigner here below, he no more belongs to this world, but the world to come. The Lord, then, in this respect, hath put a difference between Israel and Egypt.

Third; this difference of nature is followed by a difference in God's *judicial treatment.* With both, his dealings are just and right. God forbid that he should be unjust to any man! The Lord is never severe beyond what justice demands, nor gracious beyond what justice allows. Here comes the unrenewed, the ungodly man; he brings up his good works, his prayers, his tears; the Lord will judge him according to his works, and woe worth the day to him; it will be a day of sorrow indeed, for he will soon discover that his righteousness is as filthy as rags, and that all his good works only seemed to be good because he was in the dark, and could not see the spots that defiled them. Another man approaches, it is the renewed man. God deals with him justly, it is true, but not according to the scale of the law; he looks at that man as accepted in Christ Jesus, justified through Christ's righteousness, and washed in his blood; and now he deals with that man, not as a judge with a criminal, nor as a king with a subject, but as a father with a child. That man is taken to Jehovah's bosom; his offence is put away, his soul constantly renewed by the influence of divine grace, and the dealings of God with him are as different from the dealings of God with another man, as the love of a husband differs from the sternness of an incensed monarch. On the one hand, it is simple justice; on the other hand, fervent love; on the one hand, the inflexible severity of a judge, and on the other hand, the unbounded affection of a parent's heart. The Lord, then, in this also hath put a difference between Israel and Egypt.

Fourth. This distinction is carried out in *providence.* It is true, that to the naked eye, one event happens to both; the righteous suffer as well as the wicked, and they go to the grave which is appointed for all living; but if we could look more closely into God's providence, we should see lines of light dividing the path of the godly from the lot of the transgressor. To the righteous man every providence is a blessing. A blessing is

wrapped up in all our curses and in all our crosses. Our cups are sometimes bitter, but they are always healthful. Our woe is our weal. We are never losers by our losses, but we grow rich towards God when we become poor towards men. To the sinner, however, all things work together for evil. Is he prosperous? He is as the beast that is fattened for the slaughter. Is he healthy? He is as the blooming flower that is ripening for the mower's scythe. Does he suffer? His sufferings are the first drops of the eternal hail-storm of vengeance. Everything to the sinner, if he could but open his eye, hath a black aspect. The clouds are to him big with thunders, and the whole world is alive with terror. If earth could have its way, it would shake off from its bosom the monsters that forget God. But to the righteous all things work together for good. Come foul or come fair, all shall end well, every wave speeds him to his desired haven, and even the rough blast swells his sails, and drives him the more swiftly towards the port of peace. The Lord hath put a difference between Israel and Egypt in this world.

Fifth. That difference, however, will come out more distinctly on *the judgment day*. Then, when he shall sit upon the throne of his glory, he shall divide them, the one from the other, as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats. He shall cry unto his angels, and say, "Gather out of my kingdom all things that offend, and them that do iniquity." Then, with the sharp sickle in his hand, will the angel fly through the midst of heaven, and reap the tares, and gather them together in bundles to burn. But, stepping from his throne, not delegating the delightful task to an angel, the King himself, the crowned Reaper, shall take his own golden sickle, and shall gather the wheat into his barn. Oh! then, when hell shall open wide its mouth, and swallow up the impenitent, when they shall go down alive into the pit, as Korah, Dathan, and Abiram did of old—then, when they shall see the righteous ascending to heaven, like a stream of light, in their bright and glistering garments, shout triumphant hymns and choral symphonies, then shall it be seen that the Lord hath put a difference. When, across the impassable gulf, the rich man shall see Lazarus in Abraham's bosom—when, from the lowest pit of hell, the condemned one shall see the accepted one glori-

fied in bliss—then shall the truth stand out, written in letters of fire—"*The Lord hath put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel.*"

II. We pass on to our second point—WHEN IS THIS DIFFERENCE SEEN?

First. Our answer is, it is often seen *in God's temple.* Two men go up to the temple to worship; they take their seats side by side in God's house; the Word is preached to them both; they both hear it, perhaps, with like attention; the one goes his way to forget, the other remembers. They come again: the one listens, and the minister is to him as one that playeth a goodly tune upon an instrument; the other listens and weeps; he feels that the word is quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword. It comes home to his conscience; it pierces him, cuts him to the quick; every word seems to be as an arrow shot from the bow of God, and finding a target in his conscience. And now they come again. The one feels the world at last to be *his;* he has been led to repentance and faith in Christ through it, and now comes up to sing God's praises as his accepted child; while the other remains to sing, as a mere formalist—to join in worship in which he feels but little interest—to lift up his voice in a prayer when his heart is far absent. If I had here, this morning, a heap of steel filings and of ashes mixed together, and I wanted to detect the difference between the two, I should have nothing to do but to thrust in a magnet; the filings would be attracted and the ashes would remain. So with this congregation. If I would know to-day who are those who are of God's Israel, and who are still the base-born Egyptians, there is nothing needed but to preach the gospel. The gospel finds out God's people; it has an affinity to them. When it comes to them they receive it, God's Holy Spirit opening their hearts; they lay hold of it, and rejoice in it; while those who are not God's, who have no part or interest in the redemption of Christ, hear it in vain, and are even hardened by it, and go their way to sin with a higher hand, after all the warnings they have received.

Come now, my hearer, have you ever seen this difference made between yourself and another man? Do you hear the gospel now as you have never heard it before? This is the age

of hearing; there are more people attending our places of worship now than ever there were; but still it is not the hearers, but the doers of the Word that are blessed. Say, then, have you been made to hear the Word as you never heard before? Do you listen to it, hoping that it may be blessed to you, desiring that your conscience may be subjected to it, just as the gold is subject to the goldsmith's hand? If so, there is the first sign of a difference which God has put between you and the Egyptians.

Second. If the Israelite is consistent with his duty, as I think he must be, in a little while he feels it incumbent upon him to come out from the rest of mankind, and to be united *with Christ's Church.* "The Lord hath put a difference," saith he; "now I will show this difference. My Master hath said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." I put no trust in baptism, but I must show that I am no longer what I was. I desire to be obedient to my Lord and Master. I desire to cross the rubicon. To draw my sword against the world, once and forever to throw away the scabbard. I long to do a something that shall make the world see that I am crucified to it, and that it is crucified to me. Let me then be buried in water, 'in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,' as the picture of my death to all the world. Let me rise out of the water, as the picture of my resurrection to a new life; and God help me from that blessed hour to go on my way walking as one who is not of the world, even as Christ is not of the world." As often as the table is spread, upon which we celebrate the memorial of the body and the blood of Christ, God again seals that difference. The unconverted, if the minister be faithful, are warned to go their way, for if they eat there, they will eat and drink damnation to themselves, not discerning the Lord's body. *They* are invited to come, and *they only* who are believers in Jesus, who have a hope that they are changed men, and have been renewed by divine grace in the spirit of their minds. Thus do we show to the world, in the two outward symbols, that the Lord hath put a difference.

Third. But further: *the whole of a Christian's life*, if he be what he should be, is showing forth to the world that the Lord

hath put a difference. Here are two men in trial; the same trouble has befallen them both; they are partners in business; their money is all gone; the house has gone to ruin; they are brought down to beggary, and have to start in the world again. Now, which of these two is the Christian man? There is one ready to tear his hair; he cannot bear that he should have worked all his life, and now should be poor as Lazarus. He thinks Providence is unfair. "There is many a vagabond," says he, "getting rich, and here am I, after toiling hard and paying every man his own, brought down to the ground, having nothing left." But the Christian man—if he really be a Christian, (mark that, for there are a great many that profess to be Christians and are not, and it is the rough wind that tries them)—says, "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord." "I know that all things work together for good. I will put my shoulder to the wheel, and work up once more;" and so with courage and with confidence in Christ he goes again to his labor, and God blesses him yet once more, nay, blesses him in his trials more than he was ever blessed in his prosperity. Here are two men again: they have both been doing wrong, and when the righteous fall as well as the wicked, who is to know the difference? The next morning one of them rises, and is quite easy about the matter—he knows no wounds in his conscience, or if he be uneasy it is because he is afraid of being found out. He is like one who, having fallen into the mire, lies and rolls there.

But here comes the Christian. He feels he has done wrong. "What shall I do?" says he, "to make reparation to man, and to show my repentance towards God." He would be ready to go down on his knees before any one he had injured, and confess how wrong he has been. He hates himself, he loathes himself, because he has done wrong. He would sooner die than sin; and now that he finds he has sinned, he wishes he had died sooner than he should ever have dishonored his Lord and Master. If you see a sheep fall into the mire, it is quick enough up again; but if the swine falls there, it wallows in it again and again, and nothing but the whip or the stick can make it rise. So that there is an essential difference between the righteous and the wicked even in their sins. "A righteous man falleth seven

times, but he riseth up again;" as for the wicked, he rolls and revels in his sin, abiding and continuing in it. God has set a difference; and even when that difference is obscured it may yet be discerned. There is a ring about the Christian man that is not to be mistaken. Do what you will with him, he is not what the other man is, and you cannot make him so. Here is a new coin which looks amazingly like a sovereign, and I turn it over, it is so clever a counterfeit that I cannot discover whether it is gold or no. Here is another; it is a light sovereign, I find. I look at them both, and at first sight I am inclined to think that my new-minted sovereign is the best of the two; for, say I, the other is evidently much worn and light. But there is a ring about the Christian that proves him to be gold, after all, even when he is worn and short in weight. You may deface him so that the king's image is not apparent upon him, but he is gold for all that; he only needs to be tried, and in the hour of trial that golden sound of grace will detect him, and he will prove still to be one in whom God hath made a difference.

Fourth. This distinction also comes out in a godly man when he is under the pressure of some *strong temptation*. There are two tradesmen: both seem to trade in the same way; but at last a rare chance occurs to them. If they have no conscience they can make a fortune. Now will be the test. One man looks out for the opportunity, and unscrupulously grasps it. That man is no Christian; put that down as certain. There is another man: he feels a longing for the gain, for he is human; but his heart hates the sin, for it is renewed by divine grace. "No," he says, "better shut up shop than earn my living by dishonesty: better for me to be ruined in this life than that I should be ruined in the world to come." The maxim of the establishment on the other side of the road is, "*We must live;*" the maxim of this shop will be, "We must die." You who are customers, soon know in which place you will be dealt with most honestly, and there you discover in some degree, that the Lord hath put a difference between Egypt and Israel.

Fifth. But not to keep you long on this point: that difference shines forth very vividly *in the dying hour*. Oh! how distinct is that difference sometimes! The last time the cholera visited

London with severity, though I had many engagements in the country, I gave them up to remain in London. It is the duty of the minister, always to be on the spot in times of visitation and disease. I never saw more conspicuously in my life, the difference between the man that feareth God and the man that feareth him not, than I did then. Called up one Monday morning, at about half-past three, to go and see a man who was dying, I went to him, and entered the place where he was lying. He had been down to Brighton on the Sunday morning on an excursion, and came back ill; and there he lay on the borders of the tomb. I stood by his side, and spoke to him. The only consciousness he had was a foreboding of terror, mingled with a stupor of alarm; soon even that was gone, and I had to stand sighing there with a poor old woman who had watched over him, hopeless altogether about his soul. I went home. I was called away to see a young woman; she was also in the last extremity, but it was a fair, fair sight: she was singing, though she knew she was dying; talking to those round about her, telling her brothers and sisters to follow her to heaven, bidding good-bye to her father, smiling as if it were a marriage-day. She was happy and blessed. I then saw very clearly, that if there is not a difference in the joy of life, there is a difference when we come to the dying hour. But the first case I mentioned is not the worst I have ever seen. Many have I seen dying, whose histories it would not do to tell. I have seen them when their eye-balls have been glaring from their sockets—when they have known Christ and have heard the gospel, but yet have rejected it. They have been dying in agonies so extreme, that one could only fly from the room, feeling that it was a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of an angry God, and to enter into that all-devouring fire. On the dying bed it will be manifest that the Lord hath put a difference between Israel and Egypt.

III. My last point is, WHY SHOULD THAT DIFFERENCE BE SEEN? I have here a practical aim and drift; and I hope that if the rest of the sermon shall fall dead upon you, this, at least, may quicken your consciences.

This is an age which has many hopeful signs in it; but yet,

if we judge according to the rule of Scripture, there are some very black marks upon this century. I sometimes fear that the only age to which we can be truly likened, is the time before the flood, when the sons of God intermarried with the daughters of men, and when there ceased to be a distinction between the Church and the world. It is but the part of candor to acknowledge, that there is such a mixture now-a-days, such a compromise, such a giving and a taking on both sides of religious questions, that we are like a leavened mass, mingled and united together. All this is wrong; for God has always intended there should be a distinction between the righteous and the wicked, as clear and as palpable as the distinction between the day and the night.

My first argument is this. Whenever the Church has been thoroughly distinct from the world, she has always prospered. During the first three centuries the world hated the Church. The prison, the stake, the heels of the wild horse, these were thought too good for the followers of Christ. When a man became a Christian, he gave up father and mother, house and lands, nay, his own life also. When they met together they must meet in the catacombs, burning candles at high noon, because there was darkness in the depths of the earth. They were despised and rejected of men. "They wandered about in sheeps' skins and goats' skins, destitute, afflicted, tormented." But then was the age of heroes; that was the time of giants. Never did the Church so much prosper, and so truly thrive as when she was baptized in blood. The ship never sails so gloriously along as when the bloody spray of her martyrs falls upon her deck. We *must* suffer, and we *must* die, if we are ever to conquer this world for Christ. Was there ever such a surprising miracle as the spread of the gospel during the first two or three centuries? Within fifty years after Christ had ascended to heaven, the gospel was preached in every known part of the world, and there were converts to Christ in the most inhospitable regions. Further than the ships of Tarshish had the gospel flown; the pillars of Hercules had not bounded the industry of the apostles. To wild and uncivilised tribes, to Picts and Scots, and fierce Britons, was the gospel proclaimed. Churches were founded, some of

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which have lasted in their purity to this day. And all this, I believe, was partly the result of that striking, that marked difference between the Church and the world.

Certainly, during the period after Constantine professed to be a Christian, changing with the times, because he saw it would strengthen his empire—from the time when the Church began to be linked with the state—the Lord left her, and gave her up to barrenness, and Ichabod was written on her walls. It was a black day for Christendom when Constantine said, "I am a Christian." "By this sign I conquer," said he. Yes, it was the true reason of his pretended conversion. If he could conquer by the cross it was well enough; if he could have conquered by Jupiter he would have liked it equally well. From that time the Church began to degenerate. And coming down to the middle ages, when you could not tell a Christian from a worldling, where were you to find piety at all, or life or grace left in the land? Then came Luther, and with a rough grasp he rent away the Church from the world—pulled her away at the risk of rending her in pieces. And then "The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers took counsel together, against the Lord and against his Anointed;" but he that sitteth in the heavens did laugh at them; Jehovah had them in derision. The Church went forth conquering and to conquer, and her main weapon was her *non-conformity* to the world, her coming out from among men. Put your finger on any prosperous page in the Church's history, and I will find a little marginal note reading thus: "In this age men could readily see where the Church began and where the world ended." Never were there good times when the Church and the world were joined in marriage with one another.

But though this were sufficient argument for keeping the Church and the world distinct, there are many others. The more the Church is distinct from the world in her acts and in her maxims, the more true is her testimony for Christ, and the more potent is her witness against sin. We are sent into this world to testify against evils; but if we dabble in them ourselves, where is our testimony? If we ourselves be found faulty, we are false witnesses; we are not sent of God; our testimony

is of none effect. I do not hesitate to say there are tens of thousands of professing Christians, whose testimony before the world is rather injurious than beneficial. The world looks at them and says, "Well, I see: you can be a Christian, and yet remain a rogue." "Ah!" says another, "you can be a Christian, I perceive; but then you will have to be doleful and miserable." "Ah!" cries another, "these Christians like to drink sin in secret behind the door. Their Christianity lies in not liking to sin openly; but they can devour a widow's house when nobody is looking on; they can be drunkards, only it must be in a very small party; they would not like to be discovered tipsy where there were a hundred eyes to look at them." Now, what is all that? It is just this—that the world has found out that the Church visible is not the unmixed Church of Christ, since it is not true to its principles, and does not stand up for the uprightness and integrity, which are the marks of the genuine Church of God. Many Christians forget that they are bearing a testimony: they do not think that anybody notices them. Ay, but they do. There are no people so much watched as Christians. The world reads us from the first letter of our lives to the end; and if they can find a flaw—and, God forgive us, they may find very many—they are sure to magnify the flaw as much as ever they can. Let us therefore be very watchful, that we live close to Christ, that we walk in his commandments always, that the world may see that the Lord hath put a difference.

And what think you is it that props up the system of trade that is carried on among us? You all know that there are businesses where it is not possible for a young man to be honest in the shop, where, if he spoke the downright truth, he would be discharged. Why is it, think you, that the system of ticketing goods in the window differently from what they are sold indoors, or exhibiting one thing and then giving another article, the system of telling white lies across the counter with the intention of getting a better price, is maintained? Why, it would not stand an hour, if it were not for the professing Christians who practice it. They have not the moral courage to say, once for all, "We will have nothing to do with these things." If they did, if the Church renounced these unholy customs, busi

ness would alter within the next twelve months. The props of felony, and the supports of roguery, are these professing Christian men, who bend their backs to do as other men do; who, instead of stemming the torrent, give up and swim along with it—the dead fish in our churches, that flow with the stream, unlike the living fish which always go against it, and swim upward to the river's source. I would not speak too severely of Christ's Church, for I love her; but because I love her, I must therefore utter this. Our being so much like the world, our trading as the world trades, our talking as the world talks, our always insisting upon it that we must do as other people do, this is doing more mischief to the world than all our preachers can hope to effect good. "Come ye out from among them; touch not the unclean thing, be ye separate, saith the Lord: and I will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters."

This surely, a stern, rough argument, might move us to be separate from the world. But, once again, how is it possible for us to honor Jesus Christ, while there is no difference between us and the world? I can imagine that a man may not profess to be a Christian, and yet he may honor his Master; that, however, is a matter of imagination. I do not know of an instance; but I cannot imagine a man professing to be a Christian, and then acting as the world acts, and yet honoring Christ.

Methinks I see my Master, now he stands before me. He has more than those five blessed wounds. I see his hands running with blood. "My Master! my Master!" I cry, "where didst thou get those wounds? those are not the piercings of the nails, nor the gash of the spear-thrust; whence come those wounds?" I hear him mournfully reply, "These are the wounds which I have received in the house of my friends; such-and-such a Christian fell, such-and-such a disciple followed me afar off, and at last, Peter-like, denied me altogether. Such an one of my children is covetous, such another of them is proud, such another has taken his neighbor by the throat, and said, 'Pay me what thou owest,' and I have been wounded in the house of my friends." Oh, blessed, Jesus, forgive us, forgive us, and give us thy grace, that we may do so no more, for we *would* follow thee whithersoever thou goest; thou knowest, Lord, *we would* be thine, we

ould honor thee and not grieve thee. Oh, give us now then of thine own Spirit, that we may come out from the world and be like thyself—holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners.

I have but just these two things to say, and then I have done. To professors of religion this word. There are some of you professors of religion that are base coin. When you come to the Lord's table you *lie*, and when you say of yourself, "I am a member of such-and-such a church," you say what is a disgrace to you. Now, let me remind you, sirs, that you may hold your profession here, but when you come before God's bar at last you will find it a terrible thing not to have had a reality in your profession. Tremble, sirs, at God's right hand. There hangs the scale, and you must be put into it, and if you are found wanting, your portion must be among the deceivers. Tremble, deacon, church-member, if you are not what you profess to be; there is a doom awaiting you of a direr sort than even for the ungodly and the reprobate. From the height of your profession you shall be plucked down. You have built your nest among the stars, but you must make your bed in hell. You have decked your head with a crown, but you must wear a wreath of fire; you must have those fine robes plucked off, that tinsel and that paint must all be removed, and you, naked to your shame, shall become a hissing even to the damned, as they shall point to you and cry, "There goes the man who destroyed himself by deceiving others. There is the wretch who talked of God and of Christ, and did not think himself such an one as we are, and now he too is bound up in the bundle to be burnt."

The last word is to those who are not professors at all. God has made a difference between you and the righteous. Oh, my dear friends, I beseech you turn that thought over in your minds! There are no three characters, no intermediate links; there is no border-land between the righteous and the wicked. To-day you are either a friend to God or an enemy to him. You are at this hour either quickened or dead; and oh! remember, when death comes, it is either heaven or hell with you—either angels or fiends must be your companions, and either the flames must be your bed and fiery coverlet, or else the glories of eternity must

be your perpetual inheritance. Remember, the way to heaven is open. "He that believeth in the Lord Jesus shall be saved." Believe on him, and live. Trust him, and you are saved. Cast your soul's confidence on Jesus, and you are *now* delivered. God help you to do that now, and there shall be no difference any more between you and the righteous, but you shall be of them, and with them, in the day when Jesus cometh to sit upon the throne of his father David, and to reign among men. AMEN.

SERMON XI.

A BLAST AGAINST FALSE PEACE.

[On Sabbath morning, Feb. 26, 1860, Mr. Spurgeon delivered the following discourse to his great audience in Exeter Hall. To many who heard him it must have sounded like a blast from the trump of doom. It comes down with the sweep of a tempest upon slumbering consciences; its smiting is terrible to those who are at ease in or out of Zion. Nor was it in vain. The author says, "it has aroused slumberers in different parts of the land." May the same effects follow it here.]

"Peace, peace, when there is no peace."—JEREMIAH, vi. 14.

THE physician who should pamper a man in his disease, who should feel his cancer, or inject continual poison into the system, while at the same time he promised sound health and long life —such a physician would not be one half so hideous a monster of cruelty as the professed minister of Christ who should bid his people take comfort, when, instead thereof, he ought to be crying, "Woe unto them that are at ease in Zion: be troubled, ye careless ones." The work of the ministry is no child's play; it is a labor which might fill an angel's hands. Much prayer we need that we may be kept honest, and much grace that we may not mislead the souls whom we are bound to guide. The pilot who should pretend to steer a ship towards its proper haven, but who should meanwhile occupy himself below with boring holes in her keel that she might sink, would not be a worse

traitor than the man who takes the helm of a church, and professes to be steering it towards Christ, while all the while he is ruining it by diluting the truth as it is in Jesus, concealing unpalatable truths, and lulling men into security with soft and flattering words. We might sooner pardon the assassin who stretches forth his hand under the guise of friendship, and then stabs us to the heart, than we could forgive the man who comes towards us with smooth words, telling us that he is God's ambassador, but all the while foments rebellion in our hearts, and pacifies us while we are living in revolt against the majesty of heaven.

But, my dear hearers, it is a lamentable fact, that without any hireling-shepherd to cry, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace," men will cry that for themselves. They need not the syren song to entice them to the rocks of presumption and rash confidence. There is a tendency in their own hearts to put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter—to think well of their evil estate and foster themselves in proud conceit. No man is ever too severe with himself. We hold the scales of justice with a very unsteady hand when our character is in the balance. We are too ready to say, "I am rich and increased in goods," when at the same time we are naked, and poor, and miserable. Let men alone, let no deluder seek to deceive them, hush for ever every false and tempting voice, they will themselves, impelled by their own pride, run to an evil conceit, and make themselves at ease, though God himself is in arms against them.

It is no uncommon thing with me to meet with people who say, "Well, I am happy enough. My conscience never troubles me. I believe if I were to die I should go to heaven as well as anybody else." I know that those men are living in the commission of glaring sins, and I am sure they could not prove their innocence even before the bar of man; yet will these men look you in the face and tell you that they are not at all disturbed at the prospect of dying. They laugh at death as though it were but a scene in a comedy, and joke at the grave as if they could leap in and out of it at their pleasure. Well, gentlemen, I will take you at your word, though I don't believe you. I will suppose you have this peace, and I will endeavor to ac-

count for it on certain grounds which may render it somewhat more difficult for you to remain in it. I pray that God the Holy Spirit may destroy these foundations, and demolish these bulwarks of yours, and make you feel uneasy in your consciences and troubled in your minds; for un-ease is the road to ease, and disquiet in the soul is the road to the true quiet. To be tormented on account of sin is the path to peace, and happy shall I be if I can hurl a fire-brand into your hearts this morning; if I shall be able, like Samson, to turn at least some little foxes loose into the standing corn of your self-conceit and set your conscience in a blaze.

1. The first person I shall have to deal with this morning, is the man who has peace because he spends his life in a ceaseless round of gaiety and frivolity. You have scarcely come from one place of amusement before you enter another. You are always planning some excursion, and dividing the day between one entertainment and another. You know that you are never happy except you are in what you call gay society, where the frivolous conversation will prevent you from hearing the voice of your conscience. In the morning you will be asleep while God's sun is shining, but at night you will be spending precious time in some place of foolish, if not lascivious mirth. Like Saul, the deserted king, you have an unquiet spirit, and therefore you call for music, and it hath its charms, doubtless, charms not only to sooth the stubborn breast, but to still a stubborn conscience for awhile; but while its notes are carrying you upwards towards heaven, in some grand composition of a master author, I beseech you never to forget that your sins are carrying you down to hell. If the harp should fail you, then you call for Nabal's feast. There shall be a sheep shearing, and you shall be drunken with wine, until your souls become as stolid as a block. And then you wonder that you have peace. What wonder! Surely any man would have peace when his heart has become as hard as a stone. What weathers shall it feel? What tempests shall move the stubborn bowels of a granite rock? You sear your consciences, and then marvel that they feel not. Perhaps too, when both wine and the viol fail you, you will call for the dance, and the daughter of Herodias

shall please Herod, even though John the Baptist's head should pay the forfeit. Well, well, if you go from one of these scenes to another, I am at no loss to solve the riddle that there should be with you, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace."

And now sit for your portraits; I will paint you to the life. A company of idolaters are gathered togther around an hideous image. There sits the blood-delighting Moloch. He is heated hot. The fire blazes in his brazen centre, and a child is about to be put into his arms. The mother and father are present when the offspring of their own loins is to be immolated. The little one shrieks with terror; its little body begins to consume in this desperate heat. Will not the parents hear the cry of their own flesh, and listen to the wailings of the fruit of their own bowels? Ah, no, the priests of Moloch will prevent the appeal of nature! Sounding their drums, and blowing their trumpets with all their might they drown the cries of this immolated victim. It is what you are doing! Your soul is the victim to Satan! It is being destroyed now: and if you would but listen to its cries, if you would give yourself a little quiet, you might hear your poor soul shrieking, "*Oh! do not destroy me; put not away from me the hope of mercy; send me not down to hell.*" These are shrieks that might penetrate your spirit, and startle you into wisdom. But no, you beat your drums, and sound your trumpets, and you have your dance and your merriment, that the noise of your soul may be hushed. Ah, sirs! there will be a day when you will have to hear your spirit speak. When your cups are empty, and not a drop of water can be given to your burning tongue—when your music has ceased, and the doleful "Miserere" of the lost shall be your Black Sanctus,—when you shall be launched upon a sea where merriment and mirth are strangers—then you will *hear* the cries of your soul, but hear too late. When your conscience shall cry, "Remember, thou hadst thy day of mercy; thou hadst thy day of the proclamation of the gospel, but thou didst reject it," then thou wilt wish, but wish in vain, for thunders to come and drown that still small voice, which shall be more terrible in thy ears than even the rumbling of the earthquake or the fury of the storm. Oh that ye would be wise and not barter away your souls for

gaiety. Poor sirs! There are nobler things for souls to do than to kill time. Well might Young say of it, it resembles ocean into tempest tossed, to waft a feather or to drown a fly. These things are beneath you; they do no honor to you. Oh that you would begin to live! What a price you are paying for your mirth—eternal torment for an hour of jollity—separation from God for a brief day or two of sin! Be wise, men, I beseech you; open your eyes and look about you. Be not for ever madmen. Dance not on this precipice, but stop and think. O Spirit of the living God! stay thou the frivolous, let him not rest until he has tasted the solid joy, the lasting pleasure which none but Zion's children know.

2. Well, now I turn to another class of men. Finding that amusement at last has lost its zest, having drained the cup of worldly pleasure till they find first satiety, and then disgust lying at the bottom, they want some stronger stimulus, and Satan, who has drugged them once, has stronger opiates than mere merriment for the man who chooses to use them. If the frivolity of this world will not suffice to rock a soul to sleep, he hath a yet more perilous cradle for the soul. I mean that he will lead you to imbibe infidel notions, and when this is fully accomplished, you can have "Peace, peace, when there is no peace." When I hear a man saying, "*Well, I am peaceful enough, because I am not fool enough to believe in the existence of a God, or in a world to come; I cannot imagine that this old story book of yours—the Bible—is true.*" I have two emotions within my soul; first, a disgust of the man for his dishonesty, and secondly, a pity for the sad disquietude that needs such dishonesty to cover it. Do not suspect the man of being honest. There are two sorts of infidels; one sort are such fools that they know they never could distinguish themselves by anything that was right, so they try and get a little fictitious glory by pretending to believe and defend a lie. There is another set of men who are unquiet in their consciences; they do not like the Bible, because it does not like them; it will not let them be comfortable in their sins, it is such an uneasy book to them; they did put their heads upon it once, but it was like a pillow stuffed with thorns, so they have done with it, and they would be very glad if they could actually prove

it to be untrue, which they know they cannot. I say then, I at once despise his falsehood, and pity the uneasiness of his conscience that could drive him to such a paltry shift as this to cover his terrors from the eyes of others. The more the man brags, the more I feel he does not mean it; the louder he is in his blasphemies, the more he curses, the better he argues, the more sure I am that he is not sincere, except in his desire to stifle the groans of his uneasy spirit.

Ah, you remind me, with your fine arguments, of the Chinese soldiers. When they go out to battle, they carry on their arm a shield with hideous monsters depicted upon it, and making the loudest noise they can, they imagine their opponents will run away instantly, alarmed by these amazing manifestations. And so you arm yourself with blasphemies, and come out to attack God's ministers, and think we will run away because of your sophistries. No, we smile upon them contemptuously. Once, we are told, the Chinese hung across their harbor, when the English were coming to attack them, a string of tigers' heads They said: "These barbarians will never dare to pass these ferocious heads." So do these men hang a string of old, worn-out blasphemies and impieties, and then they imagine that conscience will not be able to attack them, and that God himself will let them live at peace. Ah, sir, you shall find the red-hot shafts of divine justice too many and too terrible for your sophisms. When you shall fall under the arm of the Eternal God vain will be your logic then. Dashed to shivers, you will believe in the omnipotence, when you are made to feel it; you will know his justice when it is too late to escape from its terror. Oh, be wise, cast away these day dreams. Cease to shut thy soul out of heaven; be wise, turn thee unto God whom thou hast abused. For "All manner of sin and blasphemy, shall be forgiven unto man." He is ready to forgive you, ready to receive you, and Christ is ready to wash your blasphemy away. Now, to-day, if grace enable you, you may be an accepted child of that God whom you have hated, and pressed to the bosom of that Jehovah whose very existence you have dared to deny. God bless these words to you: if they have seemed hard, they were only meant to come home to your conscience;

an affectionate heart has led me to utter them. Oh, do not this evil thing, destroy not your soul, for the sake of seeming to be wise; stop not the voice of your conscience by those arguments which you know in your inmost soul are not true, and which you only repeat in order to keep up a semblance of consistency.

3. I shall come now to a third class of men. These are people not particularly addicted to gaiety, nor especially given to infidel notions; but they are a sort of folk who are careless, and determined to let well alone. Their motto is, "Let to-morrow take care for the things of itself; let us live while we live; let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." If their conscience cries out at all, they bid it lie still. When the minister disturbs them, instead of listening to what he says, and so being brought into a state of real peace, they cry, "Hush! be quiet! there is time enough yet; I will not disturb myself with these childish fears; be still, sir, and lie down." Ah! and you have been doing this for years, have you? Whenever you have heard an earnest, powerful sermon, you have gone home and labored to get rid of it. A tear has stolen down your cheek now and then, and you have despised yourself for it. "Oh!" you say, "it is not manly for me to think of these things." There have been a few twitches at times which you could not help, but the moment after you have your heart like a flint, impenetrably hard and stony. Well, sir, I will give you a picture of yourself. There is a foolish farmer yonder in his house. It is the dead of night: the burglars are breaking in—men who will neither spare his life nor his treasure. There is a dog down below, chained in the yard; it barks and barks, and howls again. "I cannot be quiet," says the farmer, "my dog makes too much noise." Another howl, and yet another. He creeps out of bed, gets his loaded gun, opens the window, fires it, and kills the dog. "Ah! it is all right now," he mutters; he goes to bed, lies down, and quietly rests. "No hurt will come," he says, "now; for I have made that dog quiet." Ah! but would that he could have listened to the warning of the faithful creature. Ere long he shall feel the knife, and rue his fatal folly. So you, when God is warning you—when your faithful conscience is doing its best to save you—you try to kill your only friend, while Satan and Sin are stealing up to the bedside

of your slothfulness, ready to destroy your soul forever. What should we think of the sailor at sea, who should seek to kill all the stormy petrels, that there might be an end to all storms? Would you not say, "Poor foolish man! why those birds are sent by a kind providence to warn him of the tempest. Why needs he injure them? They cause not the tumult; it is the raging sea." So it is not your conscience that is guilty of the disturbance in your heart, it is your sin; and your conscience, acting true to its character, as God's index in your soul, tells you that all is wrong. Oh, that ye would arise, and take the warning, and fly to Jesus while the hour of mercy lasts.

To use another picture. A man sees his enemy before him. By the light of his candle, he marks his insidious approach. His enemy is seeking his life. The man puts out the candle, and then exclaims, "I am now quite at peace." This is what you do. Conscience is the candle of the Lord; it shows you your enemy; you try to put it out by saying, "Peace, peace." Put the enemy out, sir! put the enemy out! God give you grace to thrust sin out! Oh may the Holy Spirit enable you to thrust your lusts out of doors! Then let the candle burn; and the more brightly its light shall shine, the better for your soul, now and hereafter. Up ye sleepers, ye gaggers of conscience, what mean you? Why are you sleeping when death is hastening on, when eternity is near, when the great white throne is even now coming on the clouds of heaven, when the trumpet of the resurrection is now being set to the mouth of the archangel—why do ye sleep? why will ye slumber? Oh that the voice of Jehovah might wake, wake, that ye may escape from the wrath to come!

4. A fourth set of men have a kind of peace that is the result of resolutions which they have made, but which they will never carry into effect. "Oh," saith one, "I am quite easy enough in my mind, for when I have got a little more money I shall retire from business, and then I shall begin to think about eternal things." I would remind you that when you were an apprentice, you said you would reform when you became a journeyman; and when you were a journeyman, you used to say you would give good heed when you became a master. But hitherto these bills have never been paid when they became due. They have

every one of them been dishonored as yet; and take my word for it, this new accommodation bill will be dishonored too. So you think to stifle conscience by what you will do by-and-bye Ah, man, but will that by-and-bye ever come? And should it come, what reason is there to expect that you will then be any more ready than you are now? Hearts grow harder, sin grows stronger, vice becomes more deeply rooted by the lapse of years. You will find it certainly no easier to turn to God then than now. *Now* it is impossible for you, apart from divine grace; *then* it shall be quite as impossible, and if I might say so, there shall be more difficulties in the way *then* than even there are *now*. What think you is the value of these promises which you have made in the court of heaven? Will God take your word again, and again, and again, when you have broken it just as often as you have given it? Not long ago you were lying on your bed with fever, and if you lived you vowed you would repent. Have you repented? And yet you are fool enough to believe that you will repent by-and-bye; and on the strength of this promise, which is not worth a single straw, you are crying to yourself, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace." A man that waits for a more convenient season for thinking about the affairs of his soul, is like the countryman in Æsop's fable, who sat down by a flowing river, saying, "If this stream continues to flow as it does now for a little while, it will empty itself, and then I shall walk over dry-shod." Ah, but the stream was just as deep when he had waited day after day as it was before. And so shall it be with you.

You remind me, by your procrastination, of the ludicrous position of a man who should sit upon a lofty branch of some tree with a saw in his hand, cutting away the branch on which he was sitting. This is what you are doing. Your delay is cutting away your branch of life. No doubt you intend to cover the well when the child is drowned, and to lock the stable door after the horse is stolen. These birds in the hand you are losing, because there may be some better bird in the bush. You are thus getting a little quiet, but oh, at what a fatal cost! Paul was troublesome to you, and so you played the part of Felix, and said, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a more con

venient season I will send for thee." Conscience was unquiet, so you stopped his mouth with this sop for Cerberus; and you have gone to your bed with this lie under your pillow, with this falsehood in your right hand—that you will be better by-and-bye. Ah, sir, let me tell you once for all, you live to grow worse and worse. While you are procrastinating, time is not staying, nor is Satan resting. While you are saying, "Let things abide," things are not abiding, but they are hastening on. You are ripening for the dread harvest; the sickle is being sharpened that shall cut you down; the fire is even now blazing into which your spirit shall be cast forever.

5. Now I turn to another class of men, in order that I may miss none here who are saying, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace." I do not doubt but that many enjoy peace in their hearts, because they are ignorant of the things of God. It would positively alarm many of our sober orthodox Christians, if they could once have an idea of the utter ignorance of spiritual things that reigns throughout this land. Some of us, when moving about here and there, in all classes of society, have often been led to remark, that there is less known of the truths of religion than of any science, however recondite that science may be. Take as a lamentable instance, the ordinary effusions of the secular press, and who can avoid remarking the ignorance they manifest as to true religion? Let the papers speak on politics, it is a matter they understand, and their ability is astonishing; but, once let them touch religion, and our Sabbath-school children could convict them of entire ignorance. The statements they put forth are so crude, so remote from the fact, that we are led to imagine that the presentation of a fourpenny testament to special correspondents, should be one of the first efforts of our societies for spreading the gospel among the heathen. Go among all ranks and classes of men, and since the day we gave up our catechism, and old Dr. Watts's and the Assemblies' ceased to be used, people have not a clear idea of what is meant by the gospel of Christ. I have frequently heard it asserted, by those who have judged the modern pulpit without severity, that if a man attended a course of thirteen lectures on geology, he would get a pretty clear idea of the system; but that you might hear not

merely thirteen sermons, but thirteen hundred sermons, and you would not have a clear idea of the system of divinity that was meant to be taught. I believe to a large extent that has been true. But the great change which has passed over the pulpit within the last two years, is a cause of the greatest thankfulness to God; and we believe will be a boon to the church and to the world at large. Ministers do preach more boldly than they did. But still there is in many quarters a profound ignorance as to the things of Christ. Our old Puritans—what masters they were in divinity! *They* knew the difference between the old covenant and the new; they did not mingle works and grace together. They penetrated into the recesses of gospel truth; they were always studying the Scriptures, and meditating on them both by day and night, and they shed a light upon the villages in which they preached, until you might have found in those days as profound theologians working upon stone heaps as you can find in colleges and universities now-a-days. How few discern the spirituality of the law, the glory of the atonement, the perfection of justification, the beauty of sanctification, and the preciousness of real union to Christ. I do not marvel that we have a multitude of men mere professors and mere formalists, who are nevertheless quite as comfortable in their minds as though they were possessors of vital godliness, and really walked in the true fear of God.

There was not—I speak of things that were—there was not in the pulpit a little while ago, a discernment between things that differ; there was not a separating between the precious and the vile. The grand cardinal points of the gospel, if not denied, were ignored. We began to think that the thinkers would overwhelm the believers, that intellectuality and philosophy would overthrow the simplicity of the gospel of Christ. It is not so now. I do, therefore, hope that as the gospel shall be more fully preached, that as the words of Jesus shall be better understood, that as the things of the kingdom of heaven shall be set in a clearer light, this stronghold of a false peace, namely, ignorance of gospel doctrines, shall be battered to its foundations. If you have a peace that is grounded on ignorance, get rid of it; ignorance is a thing, remember, that you are accountable for. You

are not accountable for the exercise of your judgment to man, but you are accountable for it to God. There is no such thing as toleration of your sentiments with Jehovah; I have no right to judge you; I am your fellow-creature. No State has any right to dictate what religion I shall believe; but, nevertheless, there is a true gospel, and there are many false ones. God has given you judgment; use it. Search the Scriptures, and remember that if you neglect this Word, and remain ignorant, your sins of ignorance will be sins of wilful ignorance, and therefore ignorance shall be no excuse. There is the Bible, you have it in your houses; you can read it. The Holy Spirit will instruct you in its meaning; and if you remain ignorant, charge it no more on the minister; charge it on no one but yourself, and make it no cloak for your sin.

6. I now pass to another and more dangerous form of this false peace. I may have missed some of you, probably; I shall come closer home to you now. Alas! alas! let us weep and weep again, for there is a plague *among us*. There are members of our churches who are saying, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace." It is the part of candor to admit that with all the exercise of judgment, and the most rigorous discipline, we cannot keep our churches free from hypocrisy. I have had to hear, to the very breaking of my heart, stories of men and women who have believed the doctrines of election, and other truths of the gospel, and have made them a sort of cover for the most frightful iniquity. I could, without uncharitableness, point to churches that are hot-beds of hypocrisy, because men are taught that it is the belief of a certain set of sentiments that will save them, and not warned that this is all in vain without a real living faith in Christ. The preacher does as good as say, if not in so many words: "If you are orthodox, if you believe what I tell you, you are saved; if you for a moment turn aside from that line which I have chalked out for you, I cannot be accountable for you; but if you will give me your whole heart, and believe precisely what I say, whether it is Scripture or not, then you are a saved man." And we know persons of that cast, who can have their shop open on a Sunday, and then go to enjoy what they call a savory sermon in the evening; men who mix up

with drunkards, and yet say they are God's elect; men who live as others live, and yet they come before you and with brazen impudence tell you that they are redeemed by the blood of Christ. It is true, they have had a deep experience, as they say. God save us from such a muddy experience as that! They have had, they say, a great manifestation of the depravity of their hearts, but still they are the precious children of God. Precious, indeed! Dear at any price that any man should give for them. If they be precious to anybody, I am sure I wish they were taken to their own place, for they are not precious to any one here below, and they are not of the slightest use to either religion or morality. Oh! I do not know of a more thoroughly damnable delusion than for a man to get a conceit into his head, that he is a child of God, and yet live in sin—talk to you about sovereign grace, while he is living in sovereign lust—stand up and make himself the arbiter of what is truth, while he himself contemns the precept of God, and tramples the commandment under foot. Hard as Paul was on such men in his time—when he said their damnation is just—he spoke a most righteous sentence. Surely the devil gloats over men of this kind. A Calvinist I am, but John Calvin never taught immoral doctrine. A more consistent expositor of Scripture than that great reformer I believe never lived, but his doctrine is not the Hyper-Calvinism of these modern times, but as diametrically opposed to it as light to darkness. There is not a word in any one of his writings that would justify any man in going on in iniquity, that grace might abound. If you do not hate sin, it is all the same what doctrine you may believe. You may go to perdition as rapidly with High-Calvinistic doctrine as with any other. You are just as surely destroyed in an orthodox as in a heterodox church, unless your life manifests that you have been "begotten again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

7. I have but one other class of persons to describe and then I shall have done when I have addressed a few sentences of warning to you all. There remains yet another class of beings, who surpass all these in their utter indifference to everything that might arouse them. They are men that are given up by God, justly given up. They have passed the boundary of his

longsuffering. He has said, "My spirit shall no more strive with them;" "Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone." As a judicial punishment for their impenitence, God has given them up to pride and hardness of heart. I will not say that there is such an one here—God grant there may not be—but there have been such to whom there has been given a strong delusion, that they might believe a lie, that they might be damned because they received not the gospel of Christ. Brought up by a holy mother, they perhaps learned the gospel when they were almost in the cradle. Trained by the example of a holy father, they went aside to wantonness, and brought a mother's grey hairs with sorrow to the grave. Nevertheless, conscience still pursued them. At the funeral of that mother, the young man paused and asked himself the question, "Have I killed her? have I brought her here?" He went home, was sober for a day, was tempted by a companion, and became as bad as ever. Another warning came. He was seized with sickness; he lay in the jaws of the grave; he woke up; he heeded, and lived as vilely as he had lived before. Often did he hear his mother's voice—though she was in the grave, she yet spoke to him. He put the Bible on the top shelf—hid it away; still, sometimes a text he had learned in infancy, would thrust itself on his mind. One night as he was going to some haunt of vice, something arrested him, conscience seemed to say to him, "Remember all that you have learned of *her*." He stood still, bit his lip a moment, considered, weighed chances. At last he said, "I will go if I am lost." He went, and from that moment it has often been a source of wonder to him that he has never thought of his mother nor of the Bible. He hears a sermon, which he does not heed. It is all the same to him. He is never troubled. He says, "I don't know how it is; I am glad of it; I am as easy now, and as frolicsome as ever a young fellow could be." Oh! I tremble to explain this quietude; but it may be—God grant I may not be a true prophet—it may be that God has thrown the reins on your neck, and said, "Let him go, let him go, I will warn him no more; he shall be filled with his own ways; he shall go the length of his chain; I will never stop him." Mark! if it be so, your damnation is as sure as if you were in the pit now. O,

may God grant that I may not have such a hearer here. But that dread thought may well make you search yourselves, for it may be so. There is that possibility; search and look, and God grant that you may no more say, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace."

Now for these last few solemn words. I will not be guilty this morning, of speaking any smooth falsehoods to you, I would be faithful with each man, as I believe I shall have to face you all at God's great day, even though you heard me but once in your lives. Well, then, let me tell you that if you have a peace to-day, which enables you to be at peace with your sins as well as with God, that peace is a false peace. Unless you hate sin of every sort, with all your heart, you are not a child of God, you are not reconciled to God by the death of his Son. You will not be perfect; I cannot expect you will live without sin; but if you are a Christian, you will hate the very sin into which you have been betrayed, and hate yourself because you should have grieved your Saviour thus. But if you love sin, the love of the Father is not in you. Be you who you may, or what you may,—minister, deacon, elder, professor, or non-professor—the love of sin is utterly inconsistent with the love of Christ. Take that home, and remember it.

Another solemn thought. If you are at peace to-day through a belief that you are righteous in yourself, you are not at peace with God. If you are wrapping yourself up in your own righteousness, and saying, "I am as good as other people, I have kept God's law, and have no need for mercy," you are not at peace with God. You are treasuring up in your impenitent heart, wrath against the day of wrath; and you will as surely be lost if you trust to your good works, as if you had trusted to your sins. There is as sure a road to perdition along the highway of morality, as down the slough of vice. Take heed that you build on nothing else but Christ; for if you do, your house will tumble about your ears, when most you need its protection.

And, yet again, my hearer, if thou art out of Christ, however profound may be thy peace, it is a false one; for out of Christ there is no true peace to the conscience, and no reconciliation to

God. Ask thyself this question, "Do I believe on the Lord Jesus Christ with all my heart? Is he my only trust, the simple, solitary rock of my refuge?" For if not, as the Lord my God liveth, before whom I stand, thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bonds of iniquity, and dying as thou art, out of Christ, thou wilt be shut out of heaven; where God and bliss are found, thy soul can never come.

And finally, let me beseech you, if you are at peace in your own mind this morning, weigh your peace thus: "Will my peace stand me on a sick bed?" There are many that are peaceful enough when they are well, but when their bones begin to ache, and their flesh is sore vexed, then they find they want something more substantial than this dreamy quietness into which their souls had fallen. If a little sickness makes you shake, if the thought that your heart is affected, or that you may drop down dead in a fit on a sudden—if that startles you, then put that question of Jeremy to yourself, "If thou hast run with the footmen and they have wearied thee, what wilt thou do when thou contendest with horses? and if in the land of peace wherein thou hadst trusted, they have wearied thee, what wilt thou do in the swellings of Jordan?" If sickness make thee shake what will destruction make thee do? Then again, put the question in another light. If your peace is good for anything, it is one that will bear you up in a dying hour. Are you ready to go home to your bed now, to lie there and never rise again? For remember, that which will not stand a dying bed, will never stand the day of judgment. If my hope begins to waver when the skeleton hand of Death begins to touch me, how will it shake, "When God's right arm is nerved for war, and thunders clothe his cloudy car?" If death makes me startle, what will the glory of God do? How shall I shrink into nothing, and fly away from him in despair! Then often put to thyself this question, "Will my peace last me when the heavens are in a blaze, and when the trembling universe stands to be judged?"

My hearers, I know I have spoken feebly to you this morning; not as I could have wished, but I do entreat you, if what I have said be not an idle dream—if it be true, lay it to heart, and may God enable you to prepare to meet him. Do not be wrapping

yourselves up and sleeping. Awake, ye sleepers, awake! Oh! that I had a trumpet voice to warn you. While you are dying, while you are sinking into perdition, may I not cry to you; may not these eyes weep for you! I cannot be extravagant here; I am acquitted of being enthusiastic or fanatical on such a matter as this. Take to heart, I beseech you, the realities of eternity. Do not forever waste your time. "Turn ye, turn ye; why will ye die, O house of Israel." Listen, now, to the word of the Gospel, which is sent to you. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and ye shall be saved." For "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," while the solemn sentence remains, "He that believeth not shall be damned." AMEN.

SERMON XII.

THE RESURRECTION.

[In this discourse we have one of the grandest efforts of the author's very fertile imagination; a splendid pictorial pageant. His many and graphic illustrations invest a sublime subject with a life-like reality. It must have impressed his hearers with a fearful sense of the unutterable solemnity of scenes in the midst of which they and all the living are so soon to stand. It was preached at Exeter Hall, April 1, 1860, one week after the discourse entitled "Remember Death."]

"But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come. Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body."—1 Cor. xv. 35—38.

We preach with words; God preaches in acts and deeds. If we would perceive it, creation and providence are two continual sermons, from the mouth of God. The seasons are four evangelists, each of them having his testimony to utter to us. Doth not *summer* preach to us of God's bounty, of the richness of his goodness, of that lavish munificence with which he has been pleased to supply the earth, not simply with food for man, but with delights for both ear and eye in the beauteous landscape, the melodies of birds, and the flowers of various hue? Have you never heard the still small voice of *Autumn*, who bears the

wheatsheaf, and whispers to us in the rustling of the seer leaf? He bids us prepare to die. "All we," saith he, "do fade as a leaf, and all our righteousness are but as filthy rags." Then comes *Winter*, crowned with snow, and he thunders out a most solemn sermon, which, if we would but listen to, might well impress us with the terrors of God's vengeance, and let us see how soon he can strip the earth of all its pleasantries, and enrobe it in storm, when he shall come himself to judge the earth with righteousness, and the people with equity. But it seems to me that *Spring* reads us a most excellent discourse upon the grand doctrine of revelation. This very month of April, which, if it be not the very entrance of spring, yet certainly introduces us to the fulness of it; this very month, bearing by its name the title of the opening month, speaks to us of the resurrection. As we have walked through our gardens, fields, and woods, we have seen the flower-buds ready to burst upon the trees, and the fruit-blossoms hastening to unfold themselves; we have seen the buried flowers upstarting from the sod, and they have spoken to us with sweet, sweet voice, the words, "Thou too shalt rise again, thou too shalt be buried in the earth like seeds that are lost in winter, but thou shalt rise again, and thou shalt live and blossom in eternal spring."

I propose this morning, as God shall enable, to listen to that voice of Spring, proclaiming the doctrine of the resurrection, a meditation all the more appropriate from the fact, that the Sabbath before last we considered the subject of Death, and I hope that then very solemn impressions were made upon our minds. May the like impressions now return, accompanied with more joyous ones, when we shall look beyond the grave, through the valley of the shadow of death, to that bright light in the distance —the splendors and glory of life and immortality.

In speaking to you upon this text, I would remark in the outset, that the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead is a doctrine peculiar to Christianity. The heathen, by the feeble light of nature, were able to spell out the truth of the immortality of the soul. Those professors of religion who deny immortality, are not so far advanced in learning as the heathen themselves. When you meet with any who think that the soul of man may possibly

become annihilated, make them a present of that little catechism brought out by the Westminster Assembly, which bears the title, "A Catechism for the Young and Ignorant." Let them read that through, and begin to understand that God hath not made man in vain. The resurrection of the *body* was that which was new in the apostolic times. When Paul stood up on Mars hill, in the midst of the learned assembly of the Areopagites, had he spoken to them about the immortality of the soul, they would not have laughed; they would have respected him, for this was one of the sublime truths which their own wise men had taught; but when he went on to assert that the flesh and blood which was laid in the tomb should yet arise again, that bones which had become the dwelling place of worms, that flesh which had corrupted and decayed, should actually start afresh into life, that the body as well as the soul should live; some mocked, and others said, "We will hear thee again of this matter." The fact is, reason teaches the immortality of the *spirit;* it is revelation alone which teaches the immortality of the *body*. It is Christ alone who hath brought life and immortality to light by the gospel. He was the clearest proclaimer of that grand truth. Albeit it had lain in the secret faith of many of the ancient people of God before, yet he it was who first set forth in clear terms the grand truth that there should be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust. As far as I know, the doctrine has not been disputed in the Christian church. There have been some few heretics who have denied it at divers times, but they have been so few, so utterly insignificant, that it is not worth while to take any notice of their scruples, or of the objections which they have urged. Instead thereof, we will turn to our text; we will assume that the doctrine is true, and so proceed to utter some words of explanation upon it.

I. First, then, our text suggests *the real identity* of the resurrection body.

The apostle uses the figure of a seed, a shrivelled grain of wheat. It is put into the ground, there it dies, all the farinacious part of it decays and forms a peculiarly fine soil, into

which the life-germ strikes itself, and upon which the life-germ feeds. The seed itself dies, with the exception of a particle almost too small to be perceived, which is the real life contained within the wheat. By-and bye we see a green blade upstarting; that grows, swells, and increases, until it comes to be the full corn in the ear. Now no one has any suspicion but that the same wheat arises from the soil into which it was cast. Put into the earth we believe it springs up, and we are accustomed to talk of it in our ordinary language as being the very seed which we sowed, although the difference is striking and marvellous. Here you have a plant some three feet high, bearing many grains of wheat, and there you had the other day a little shriveled grain; yet no one doubts but that the two are the same. So shall it be in the resurrection of the dead. The body is here but as a shrivelled seed; there is no beauty in it that we should desire it. It is put into a grave, like wheat that is sown in the earth; there it rots and decays, but God preserves within it a sort of life germ which is immortal, and when the trump of the archangel shall shake the heavens and the earth it shall expand to the full flower of manhood, a far more glorious form than the manhood which was buried.

You are, my brethren, to-day, but as a heap of wheat. Despite that earthly beauty which makes glad our countenances, we are after all shrivelled and worthless, compared with what your bodies shall be when they shall awake from their beds of silent dust and cold damp clay. Yet while they shall be different, they shall be precisely the same; the identity shall be preserved. Though there shall seem to be but little similarity, yet shall no man doubt but that the very body which was sown in the earth hath sprung up to eternal life. I suppose that if I should bring here a certain grain of seed, and you had never seen the image of the plant into which it would ripen, and I should submit it to a thousand persons here present, and ask them this question—"What form will this seed assume when it shall grow into a plant and bear a flower?" none of you could possibly tell what it would be like; yet when you saw it spring up you would say, "Well I have no doubt that the heart's-ease sprang from its own seed. I am sure that a

violet springs from a violet seed. I cannot doubt that the lily hath its own appropriate root." And another time, when you come to see the seed, you perhaps imagine you see some little likeness, at least you never mistrust the identity. Though there are wide extremes of difference between the tiny mustard seed and the great tree beneath the branches of which the birds of the air build their nests, yet you never for a moment question but what they are precisely the same. The identity is preserved. So shall it be in the resurrection of the dead. The difference shall be extraordinary, yet shall the body be the same.

In order to affirm this, the ancient Christian church was in the habit in their creed of adding a sentence to the article which runs thus: "I believe in the resurrection of the dead." They added, "I believe in the resurrection of the dead, *of this very flesh and blood.*" I do not know that the addition was ever authorized by the church, but it was continually used, especially at the time when there was a discussion as to the truth of the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. The very flesh and blood that is buried, the very eyes that are closed in death, the very hand which stiffens by my side, these very members shall live again—not the identical particles of the same matter any more than the self-same particles of the wheat spring up to make a blade, and to make full corn in the ear. Yet shall they be identical, in the true sense of the term, they shall spring up from this body—shall be the true result and development of this poor flesh and blood.

Many objections have been raised against this, but they are all readily answered. Some have said, "But when men's bodies are dead, and are committed to the grave, they are often digged up, and the careless sexton mixes them with common mould: nay, it sometimes happens that they are carted away from the churchyard, and strewn over the fields, to become a rich manure for wheat, so that the particles of the body are absorbed in the corn that is growing, and they travel round in a circle until they become the food of man. So that the particle which may have been in the body of one man enters into the body of another. Now," say they, "how can all these particles be tracked?" Our answer is, if it were necessary, every atom could be

traced. Omnipotence and Omniscience could do it. If it were needful that God should search and find out every individual atom that ever existed, he would be able to detect the present abode of every single particle. The astronomer is able to tell the position of one star by the aberration of another; by his calculation, apart from observation he can discover an unknown orb; its hugeness puts it within his reach. But to God there is nothing little or great; he can find out the orbit of one atom by the aberration of another atom—he can pursue and overtake each separate particle. But recollect, this is not necessary at all, for, as I said before, the identity may be preserved without there being the same atoms. Just go back to the excellent illustration of our text. The wheat is just the same, but in the new wheat that has grown up there may not be one solitary particle of that matter which was in the seed cast into the ground. A little seed that shall not weigh the hundredth part of an ounce falls into the earth, and springs up and produces a forest tree that shall weigh two tons. Now, if there be any part of the original seed in the tree, it must be but in the proportion of a millionth part, or something less than that. And yet is the tree positively identical with the seed—it is the same thing. And so there may only be a millionth part of the particles of my body in the new body which I shall wear, but yet it may still be the same. It is not the identity of the matter that will make positive identity. I shall show you that again.

Are you not aware that our bodies are changing—that in about every ten years we have different bodies from what we had ten years ago? That is to say, by decay, and the continual wearing away of our flesh, there is not in this body I have here, a single particle that was in my body ten years ago, and yet I am the same man. I know I am precisely the same. So you. You shall have been born in America, and lived there twenty years; you shall suddenly be transferred to India, and live there another twenty years; you come back to America to see your friends—you are the same man, they know you, recognize you, you are precisely the same individual; but yet philosophy teaches us a fact which cannot be denied—that your body would have changed twice in the time you have been absent from your

friends; that every particle is gone, and has had its place supplied by another; and yet the body is the same. So that it is not necessary there should be the same particles; it is not needful that you should track every atom and bring it back in order that the body should preserve its identity.

Have you never heard the story of the wife of Peter Martyr, a celebrated reformer, who died some years before the time of Queen Mary? Since his enemies could not reach his body, they took up the body of his wife after she was dead, and buried it in a dung-hill. During the reign of Elizabeth, the body was removed from its contemptuous hiding-place; it was then reduced to ashes. In order that the Romanists, if they should ever prevail again, might never do dishonor to that body, they took the ashes of Peter Martyr's wife and mixed them with the reputed ashes of a Romish saint. Mixing the two together, they said, "Now these Romanists will never defile this body, because they will be afraid of desecrating the relics of their own saint." Perhaps some wiseacres may say, "How can these two be separated?" Why, they could be divided readily enough if God willed to do it; for granted that God is omniscient and omnipotent, and you have never to ask *how*, for omniscience and omnipotence put the question out of court, and decide the thing at once. Besides, it is not necessary that it should be so. The life-germs of the two bodies may not have mixed together. God has set his angels to watch over them, as he set Michael to watch over the body of Moses, and he will bring out the two life-germs, and they shall be developed, and the two bodies shall start up separately at the sound of the archangel's trump. Remember, then, and doubt not that the very body in which you sinned shall be the very body in which you shall suffer; and the body in which you believe in Christ, and in which you yield yourselves to God, shall be the very body in which you shall walk the golden streets, and in which you shall praise the name of God for ever and ever.

II. But observe, while the identity is real, *the transformation* is glorious.

The body here is mortal, always subject to decay. We dwell

in a poor, uncomfortable tent; continually is the canvas being rent, the cords are being loosed, and the tent pins are being pulled up. We are full of sufferings, and aches, and pains, which are but the premonitions of coming death. We all know, some by our decayed teeth, which are but the emblems of a decayed man; others by those gray hairs which are scattered here and there; we all know that our bodies are so constituted that they cannot remain here except for a limited period, and they must—so God has willed it—return to their native dust. Not so, however, the new body: "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption." It will be a body upon which the tooth of time can have no power, and into which the dart of death can never be thrust. Age shall roll after age, but that body shall exist in everlasting youth. It shall sing, but never shall its song be stayed by weakness; it shall fly, but never shall its flight flag with weariness. There shall be no signs of mortality; the shroud, the mattock, and the spade are never seen in heaven. Such a thing as an open grave shall never appear in the celestial kingdom; there they live, live, live, but never, never, never shall they die. See, then, how different the body must be; for as this body is constituted, every nerve and every bloodvessel tells me I must die. It cannot be otherwise. I must endure this stern decree, "Dust to dust, earth to earth, ashes to ashes," but in heaven every nerve of the new body shall cry, "Immortality." Every part of that new frame shall speak for itself, and tell to the immortal spirit that they are everlasting companions, married in eternal wedlock.

There shall be, moreover, a great change in the new body as to its *beauty*. "It is sown in dishonor: it shall be raised in glory." The old metaphor employed by all preachers upon this doctrine must be used again. You see here a crawling caterpillar, a picture of yourself, a creature that eats and drinks, and may readily be trodden on. Wait a few weeks, that caterpillar shall spin itself a shroud, lie down, become inactive, and sleep. A picture of what you shall do. You must spin your winding-sheet and then be laid in the tomb. But wait a while; when the warmth of the sun shall come that apparently lifeless thing shall burst its sheath. The chrysalis shall fall off, and the

insect fly forth equipped with glittering wings. Having arrived at its full state of perfection, the very image of the creature shall be seen by us all dancing in the sunbeam. So shall we after passing through our wormhood here to our chrysalis state in the grave, burst our coffins and mount aloft glorious winged creatures made like unto the angels; the same creatures, but oh! so changed, so different, that we should scarce know our former selves, if we could be able to meet them again after we have been glorified in heaven.

There shall be a change, then, in our form and nature. Old master Spenser, who was a rare hand at making metaphors, says, "The body here is like an old rusty piece of iron, but Death shall be the blacksmith; he shall take it and he shall make it hot in his fire, until it shall sparkle and send forth burning heat and look bright and shining." And so surely is it. We are thrust into the earth as into the fire, and there shall we be made to sparkle and to shine and to be full of radiance; no more the rusty things that we once were, but fiery spirits, like the cherubim and the seraphim, we shall wear a power and a glory the like of which we have not even yet conceived.

Another transformation shall take place, namely, *in power*. "It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power." The same body that is weak shall be raised in power. We are puny things here; there is a limit to our labors, and our usefulness is straightened by reason of our inability to perform what we would. And oh, how weak we become when we die! A man must be carried by his own friends to his own grave; he cannot even lay himself down in his last resting-place. Passively he submits to be laid out, to be wrapped up in his winding-sheet, and to be shut up in the darkness of the grave. The clods are shovelled over him, but he knows it not, neither could he resist his burial if he were conscious of it. But that powerless body shall be raised in power. That was a fine idea of Martin Luther, which he borrowed from St. Anselm, that the saints shall be so strong when they are risen from the dead, that if they choose they could shake the world; they could pull up islands by their roots, or hurl mountains into the air. Some modern writers, borrowing their ideas from Milton, where he

speaks of the battles of the angels, where they plucked up the hills with all their shaggy loads, rivers and trees at once, and hurled them at the fallen spirits. have taught that we shall be clothed with gigantic force. I think if we do not go the length of the poets, we have every reason to believe that the power of the risen body will be utterly inconceivable. These, however, are but guesses at the truth; this great mystery is yet beyond us.

I believe that when I shall enter upon my new body, I shall be able to fly from one spot to another, like a thought, as swiftly as I will; I shall be here and there, as the rays of light. From strength to strength, my spirit shall be able to leap onward to obey the behests of God; upborne with wings of ether, it shall flash its way across that shoreless sea, and see the glory of God in all his works, and yet ever behold his face. For the eye shall then be strong enough to pierce through distance, and the memory shall never fail. It doth not yet appear what we shall be. But, brethren, to come back to reality, and leave fancy for a moment, though it doth not appear what we shall be, yet we know that when *he* shall appear, we shall be like *him*, for we shall see *him* as he is. And do you know what we shall be like, if we shall be like *him?* Behold the picture of what Jesus Christ is like, and we shall be like him. "I saw," saith John, "one like unto the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars, and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword; and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead." Such shall we be when we are like Christ; what tongue can tell, what soul can guess the glories that surround the saints when they start from their beds of dust, and rise to immortality. But to turn away from these, which I fear, to very many of you, are rather uninteresting particulars, let me give you one or two figures which may show to you the change which shall take place in us on the day of resurrection.

Do you see yonder a beggar? he is picking rags from a dung hill, he pulls out piece after piece from the heap of dust; you may see the like any day, if you will go to those great dust-yards in Agar Town. What can be the value of those miserable old rags? He takes them away, they are carried off, sorted, rag to its own rag, like to like. By-and-bye they are washed, put into the mill, beaten hard, ground to pulp; and what is that I see just coming out of yonder mill? A clear white sheet, without a stain; and whence came this? "I am the son of the old rag," saith he, "nay, I am the identical rag that was but a few hours ago picked from the dung-heap." Oh! strange! Doth purity come out of impurity, and doth this beauty, this utility come out of that which was neither comely nor useful, but which men loathed, and cast away as a worthless thing? See here, brethren, the picture of yourselves; your bodies are like rags, put away into this vast dunghill earth, and there buried, but the angel shall come and sort you, body to its body, the righteous to the righteous, the wicked to the wicked, they shall come together, bone to his bone and flesh to his flesh; and what do I see?—I behold a body like unto an angel, with eyes of fire, and a face like the brightness of the sun, and wings like lightnings for swiftness. Whence art thou, bright spirit? I am he that was buried, I am that thing that once was worms' meat, but now I am glorious through the name of Jesus, and through the power of God. You have there before you a picture of the resurrection, a homely picture, it is true, but one which may vividly convey the idea.

Take another—one used of old by that mighty preacher, Chrysostom—there is an old house, a straight and narrow cottage, and the inhabitant of it often shivers with the cold in winter, and is greatly oppressed by the heat of summer; it is illy adapted to his wants. The windows are too small, and very dark, he cannot keep his treasure safely therein; he is often a prisoner; and when I have passed by his house I have heard him sighing at the window: "Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death." The good master comes, the landlord of the house, he speaks to the tenant, and he bids him come away, "I am about to pull down thy old

house," saith he, "and I would not have thee here while I am pulling it stone from stone, lest thou be hurt and injured. Come away with me and live in my palace, while I am pulling thy old house to pieces." He does so, and every stone of the old house is thrown down; it is levelled with the ground, and even the foundations are dug up. Another is built: it is o. costly slabs of marble, the windows thereof are pure and clear, all its gates are of agate, and all its borders of precious stones, while all the foundations thereof are of chrysolite, and the roof thereof is of jasper. And now the master of the house speaks to the old inhabitant, "Come back, and I will show thee the house which I have built for thee." O what joy, when that inhabitant shall enter and find it so well adapted to his wants, where every power shall have full range, where he shall see God out of its windows, not as through a glass, darkly, but face to face, where he could invite even Christ himself to come and sup with him, and not feel that the house is beneath the dignity of the Son of Man. You know the parable, you know how your old house, this clay body, is to be pulled down, how your spirit is to dwell in heaven for a little while without a body, and how afterwards you are to enter into a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, a mansion which is holy, incorruptible, and undefiled, and which shall never decay.

To use yet a fresh figure, I see a beggar passing by a rich man's door; that poor wretch is covered with filth, his garments are hanging about him in pieces as if the wind would blow all away, and drive both man and garments amongst the rags upon the dunghill. How he shivers, how he seeks to pull about him that scant cloak, which will not meet around his loins, and will not shield him from the blast. As for his shoes, they are indeed old and clouted, and all his garments are of such a sort that one never could know the original, for they have been mended and patched a thousand times, and now they need to be mended and patched again. He is freely invited to come into the rich man's hall; we will not tell you what is done in the meantime, but we will see him come out of that door again, and would you know him? Would you believe that he is the same man? He has been washed and cleansed; on his back there hangs the impe-

rial purple, while on his head glitters a brilliant crown; his feet are shod with silver, and on his hands there are rings of gold. About the paps he wears a golden girdle, and as he comes abroad, bright spirits wait on him and do him honor; angels are his servants, and think it their highest pleasure to do his will. Is this the same man and is this the same dress? It is the same. By some marvellous might, God has received this beggar, taken him into the inner chamber of the grave; has washed him from all imperfections; and now he comes out as one of the princes of the blood royal of heaven. And as is his nature, such is his apparel; as is his dignity, such is his estate, and such the company of servants who wait upon him.

Not to multiply illustrations, we will use but one more. I see before me an old and battered cup, which many a black lip hath touched, out of which many a villain's throat has received moisture. It is marred and covered over with filth. Who could tell what metal it is? It is brought in and given to the silversmith; he no sooner receives it, than he begins to break it into pieces; he dashes it into shivers again and again; he pounds it until he has broken it, and then puts it into his fining pot and melts it. Now you begin to see it sparkle again, and by-and-bye he beats it out and fashions it into a goodly chalice, out of which a king may drink. Is this the same? the very same thing. This glorious cup; is this the old battered silver we saw just now? Yes it is the same, and we who are here below like vessels, alas! too unfit for the Master's use; vessels which have even given comfort to the evil ones, and helped to do the work of Satan, we shall be put into the furnace of the grave, and be there melted down and fused and fashioned into a glorious wine cup, that shall stand upon the banqueting table of the Son of God.

III. I have thus sought to illustrate the change, and now I will occupy your attention but one or two minutes on another thought, which seems to lie within the range of my text. We have had the real identity under the glorious transformation. I bring you back to a thought kindred to the first. There will be in the bodies of the righteous *an undoubted personality* of character.

If you sow barley, it will not produce wheat; if you sow tares, they will not spring up in the form of rye. Every grain hath its own peculiar form: God hath given to every seed his own body. So, my brothers and sisters, there are differences among us here; no two bodies are precisely alike: there are marks on our countenances, and in our bodily conformation, that show that we are different. We are of one blood, but not of one fashion. Well, when we are put into the grave, we shall crumble back, and come to the same elements; but when we rise, we shall every one of us rise diverse from the other. The body of Paul shall not produce a body precisely like that of Peter. Nor shall the flesh of Andrew bring forth a new body like that of the sons of Zebedee; but to every seed his own body. In the case of our blessed Lord and Master, you will remember that when he rose himself from the dead he preserved his personality; there were still the wounds in his hands, and still there was the spear-mark in his side. I do not doubt that he underwent his transfiguration, and at the time of his ascension up to heaven, he still retained the marks of his wounds. For do we not sing, and is not our song based upon Scripture?

> He looks like a Lamb that has been slain,
> And wears his priesthood still.

So, brethren, though of course we shall retain no weaknesses, nothing which will cause us sorrow, yet every Christian will retain his individuality; he will be like and yet unlike all his fellows. As we know Isaiah from Jeremy here, so shall we know them above. As I differ from you here, if we two shall together praise God, there shall be some difference between us above. Not the difference in failings, but the difference in the perfections of the form of the new body. I sometimes think martyrs will wear their scars. And why should they not? It were a loss to them if they should lose their honors. Perhaps they shall wear their ruby crowns in Paradise, and we shall know them—

> "Foremost 'mongst the sons of light,
> 'Midst the bright ones doubly bright."

Perhaps the men who come from the catacombs of Rome will wear some sort of pallor on their brow that will show they came from darkness, where they saw not the light of the sun. Perhaps the minister of Christ, though he shall not need to say to his fellows, "know the Lord," shall still be chief among the tellers of the ways of God. Perhaps the sweet singer of Israel shall still be foremost in the choir of the golden harps, and loudest among them that shall lead the strain. And if these be fancies, yet am I sure that one star differeth from another star in glory. Orion shall not be confounded with Arcturus; nor shall Mazaroth for a moment be confounded with Orion. We shall all be separate and distinct. Perhaps we shall each one have our constellation there, as we shall cluster into our own societies and gather around those whom we best have known on earth. Personality will be maintained. I do not doubt but what you will know Isaiah in heaven; and you will recognize the great preachers of the ancient Christian church; you will be able to speak with Chrysostom, and talk with Whitfield. It may be you shall have for your companions those who were your companions here; those with whom you took sweet counsel, and walked to the house of God, shall be with you there, and you shall know them, and with transporting joy you shall there together tell your former trials and ancient triumphs, and the glories you are alike made to share.

Treasure up, then, these things, the identity of your body after its glorious transformation, and, at the same time, the personality which will prevail.

I want, now, your solemn attention, while I sketch a most fearful contrast here. The things I have already spoken should make the children of God happy. At Stratford-on-Bow, in the days of Queen Mary, there was once a stake erected for the burning of two martyrs, one of them a lame man, the other a blind man. Just when the fire was lit, the lame man hurled away his staff, and turning round, said to the blind man, "Courage, brother, this fire will cure us both." So can the righteous say of the grave, "Courage, the grave will cure us all; we shall leave our infirmities behind us." What patience this should give us to endure all our trials, for they are not of long duration. They

are but as the carvings of the graver's tool, shaping these rough blocks of clay, to bring them into the right form and shape, that they may bear the image of the heavenly.

But the contrast is awful. Brethren, *the wicked* must rise again from the dead. The lip with which you have drunk the intoxicating drink till you have reeled again, that lip shall be used in drinking down the fiery wrath of God. Remember, too, ungodly woman, the eyes that are full of lust will one day be full of horror; the ear with which you listen to lascivious conversation must listen to the sullen moans, the hollow groans and shrieks of tortured ghosts. Be not deceived; you sinned in your body, you will be damned in your body. When you die, your spirit must suffer alone; that will be the beginning of hell; but your body must rise again—then this very flesh in which you have transgressed the laws of God, this very body must smart for it. Your body will be raised incorruptible, otherwise the fire would consume it. It will become like the asbestos stone, which lies in the flame and yet is never consumed. If it were this flesh and blood, it would soon die under the pangs we must endure; but it will be a body all but omnipotent. As I spoke of the righteous having such great power, so shall you have; but it will be power to agonize, power to suffer, power to die, and yet to live, uncrushed by the stern foot of death. Think of this, ye sensualists, who care not for your souls; you shall have that fair complexion scorched away. Rotting as they will do in the grave, they shall nevertheless rise with a fiery immortality about them, and endure an eternity of agony and unutterable woe and punishment. Is not that enough to make a man tremble and cry, "God be merciful unto me a sinner?"

But further, remember that while your body shall be identically the same, yet it too will be transformed; and as the wheat brings forth the wheat, so the nettle seed brings forth the nettle. What your body will be like I cannot tell; but, perhaps, as the body of the righteous will come to be like Christ, yours may become like the body of the devil, whatever that may be—the same hideous conformation, the same demon gaze and hellish stare which characterize that proud archangel shall characterize you; you shall have the image and the lineaments

of the first traitor stamped upon your face. Seeds of sin, are ye prepared to ripen into the full blown flower of destruction? Ye seeds of evil, are ye ready to be scattered now from Death's hand, and then to spring up an awful harvest of tormented ones? Yet so it must be, unless you turn to God. Except you repent, he has said, and he will do it, he is able to cast both body and soul into hell.

And let me remind you yet once again, that there will be in you an undoubted personality: you will be known in hell. The drunkard shall have the drunkard's punishment; the swearer shall have the swearer's corner to himself. "Bind them up in bundles to burn, and cast them into the fire." Thus saith the voice of inflexible justice. You shall not suffer in another man's body but in your own, and you shall be known to be the very man that sinned against God. You shall be looked at by one who sees you to-day, if you die impenitent; who will say to you, "We went up to that hall together; we heard a sermon on the resurrection which had a frightful ending; we laughed at it, but we have found out that it is true." And one will say to the other, "I should have known you, though we had not met these many years till we met in hell. There is something about your new body which lets me know that it is the same body that you had on earth." And then you will mutually say to one another, "These pangs that we are now enduring, this horror of great darkness, these chains of fire that are reserved for us, are they not well deserved?" And you will curse God together again, and suffer together, and will be made to feel that you have only received the due reward of your deeds. "Did not the man warn us," you will say; "did he not warn us? did he not bid us fly to Christ for refuge? did we not despise it, and make a jeer of what he said? We are rightly punished."

Oh! my dear hearers, I cannot bear to stay on this subject; let me finish with this word. "Whoever believeth on the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved." That means, *you* poor man, though perhaps you were drunk last night, and scarcely got up time enough to come here this morning—if thou believest, thou shalt be saved. This means thee, poor woman, sinner though thou be—if thou cast thyself on Christ thou art saved. This

means *thee*, respectable man, thou who trustest in thine own works—if thou reliest on Christ, thou shalt be saved, but not if thou trustest in thyself. Oh! be wise, be wise. May God give us grace now to learn that highest wisdom, and may we now look to the cross and to the quivering Lamb that bleeds upon it, and see him as he rises from the dead and ascends up on high, and believing in him, may we receive the hope and the assurance of a blissful resurrection in him to everlasting life. AMEN.

SERMON XIII.

THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT.

[This sermon, preached in Surrey Music Hall, Oct. 2, 1859, will give the reader a just view of the author's standing as to the doctrines of grace and the divine sovereignty. He is a sincere high Calvinist of the old puritanic school, holding the personal election of the saints by the sovereign good pleasure of God, wholly aside from the creature; and as sincere a hater of all free-will Arminianism, technically so called. A sturdy defender of the old land marks.]

"The blood of the everlasting covenant."—Hebrews, xiii. 20.

All God's dealings with men have had a covenant character. It hath so pleased him to arrange it, that he will not deal with us except through a covenant, nor can we deal with him except in the same manner. Adam in the garden was under a covenant with God. That covenant he speedily brake. There is a covenant still existing in all its terrible power—terrible I say, because it has been broken on man's part, and therefore God will most surely fulfil its solemn threatenings and sanctions. That is the covenant of works. By this he dealt with Moses, and in this doth he deal with the whole race of men as represented in the first Adam. Afterwards when God would deal with Noah, it was by a covenant; and when in succeeding ages he dealt with Abraham, he was still pleased to bind himself by a covenant. That covenant he preserved and kept, and it was renewed continually to many of his seed. God dealt not even with David,

the man after his own heart, except with a covenant. He made a covenant with his anointed; and beloved, he dealeth with you and me this day still by covenant. When he shall come in all his terrors to condemn, he shall smite by covenant—namely, by the sword of the covenant of Sinai; and if he comes in the splendors of his grace to save, he still comes to us by covenant—namely, the covenant of Zion; the covenant which he has made with the Lord Jesus Christ, the head and representative of his people.

And mark, whenever we come into close and intimate dealings with God, it is sure to be, on our part, also by covenant. We make with God, after conversion, a covenant of gratitude; we come to him sensible of what he has done for us, and we devote ourselves to him. We set our seal to that covenant when in baptism we are united with his church; and day by day, so often as we come around the table of the breaking of bread, we renew the vow of our covenant, and thus we have personal intercourse with God. I cannot pray to him except through the covenant of grace; and I know that I am not his child unless I am his, first through the covenant whereby Christ purchased me, and secondly, through the covenant by which I have given up myself, and dedicated all that I am and all that I have to him. It is important, then, since the covenant is the only ladder which reaches from earth to heaven—since it is the only way in which God has intercourse with us, and by which we can deal with him, that we should know how to discriminate between covenant and covenant; and should not be in any darkness or error with regard to what is the covenant of grace, and what is not. It shall be my endeavor, this morning, to make as simple and as plain as possible, the matter of the covenant spoken of in our text, and I shall thus speak—first, upon the *covenant of grace;* secondly, *its everlasting character;* and thirdly, the relationship which the blood bears to it. "*The blood of the everlasting covenant.*"

I. First of all, then, I have to speak of THE COVENANT mentioned in the text; and I observe that we can readily discover at first sight *what the covenant is not.* We see at once that

this is not the covenant of works, for the simple reason that this is an everlasting covenant. The covenant of works was not everlasting in any sense whatever. It was not eternal; it was first made in the garden of Eden. It had a beginning, it has been broken; it will be violated continually, and will soon be finished and pass away: therefore, it is not everlasting in any sense. The covenant of works cannot bear an everlasting title; but as the one in my text is an everlasting covenant, therefore it is not the covenant of works. God made a covenant first of all with the human race, which ran in this wise: "If thou, O man, wilt be obedient, thou shalt live and be happy, but if thou wilt be disobedient, thou shalt perish. In the day that thou disobeyest me thou shalt die." That covenant was made with all of us in the person of our representative, the first Adam. If Adam had kept that covenant, we believe we should every one of us have been preserved. But inasmuch as he broke the covenant, you and I, and all of us, fell down and were considered henceforth as the heirs of wrath, as inheritors of sin, as prone to every evil and subject to every misery. That covenant has passed away with regard to God's people; it has been put away through the new and better covenant which has utterly and entirely eclipsed it by its gracious glory.

Again, I may remark that the covenant here meant is not the covenant of gratitude which is made between the loving child of God and his Saviour. Such a covenant is very right and proper. I trust all of us who know the Saviour have said in our very hearts:—

> "'Tis done! the great transaction's done;
> I am my Lord's, and he is mine."

We have given up everything to him. But that covenant is not the one in the text, for the simple reason that the covenant in our text is an everlasting one. Ours was only written out some few years ago. It would have been despised by us in the earlier parts of our life, and cannot at the very utmost be so old as ourselves.

Having thus readily shown what this covenant is not, I may observe *what this covenant is*. To understand a covenant, you

must know, first who are the contracting parties; secondly, what are the stipulations of the contract; thirdly, what are the objects of it; and then, if you would go still deeper, you must understand something of the motives which lead the contracting parties to form the covenant between themselves.

1. Now, in this covenant of grace, we must first of all observe *the high contracting parties* between whom it was made. The covenant of grace was made before the foundation of the world between God the Father, and God the Son; or to put it in a yet more scriptural light, it was made mutually between the three divine persons of the adorable Trinity. This covenant was not made directly between God and man. Man did not at that time exist; but Christ stood in the covenant as man's representative. In that sense we will allow that it was a covenant between God and man, but not a covenant between God and any man personally and individually. It was a covenant between God with Christ, and through Christ indirectly with all the blood-bought seed who were loved of Christ from the foundation of the world. It is a noble and glorious thought, the very poetry of that old Calvinistic doctrine which we teach, that long ere the day-star knew its place, before God had spoken existence out of nothing, before angel's wing had stirred the unnavigated ether, before a solitary song had disturbed the solemnity of the silence in which God reigned supreme, he had entered into solemn counsel with himself, with his Son, and with his Spirit, and had in that council decreed, determined, purposed, and predestinated the salvation of his people. He had, moreover, in the covenant arranged the ways and means, and fixed and settled everything which should work together for the effecting of the purpose and the decree. My soul flies back, winged by imagination, and looks into that mysterious council-chamber, and by faith I behold the Father pledging himself to the Son, and the Son pledging himself to the Father, while the Spirit gives his pledge to both, and thus that divine compact, long to be hidden in darkness, is completed and settled—the covenant which in these latter days has been read in the light of heaven, and has become the joy, and hope, and boast of all the saints.

2. What were *the stipulations of this covenant?* They were somewhat in this wise. God had foreseen that man after creation would break the covenant of works; that however mild and gentle the tenure upon which Adam had possession of Paradise, yet that tenure would be too severe for him, and he would be sure to kick against it, and ruin himself. God had also foreseen that his elect ones, whom he had chosen out of the rest of mankind, would fall by the sin of Adam, since they, as well as the rest of mankind, were represented in Adam. The covenant therefore had for its end the restoration of the chosen people. And now we may readily understand what were the stipulations. On the Father's part, thus run the covenant. I cannot tell you it in the glorious celestial tongue in which it was written: I am fain to bring it down to the speech which suiteth to the ear of flesh, and to the heart of a mortal. Thus, I say, run the covenant, in lines like these: "I, the Most High Jehovah, do hereby give unto my only begotten and well-beloved Son, a people, countless beyond the number of the stars, who shall be by him washed from sin, by him preserved, and kept, and led, and by him, at last, presented before my throne, without spot, or wrinkle or any such thing. I covenant by oath, and swear by myself, because I can swear by no greater, that these whom I now give to Christ shall be forever the objects of my eternal love. Them will I forgive through the merit of the blood. To these will I give a perfect righteousness; these will I adopt and make my sons and daughters, and these shall reign with me through Christ eternally." Thus run that glorious side of the covenant.

The Holy Spirit also, as one of the high contracting parties on this side of the covenant, gave his declaration, "I hereby covenant, that all whom the Father giveth to the Son, I will in due time quicken. I will show them their need of redemption; I will cut off from them all groundless hope, and destroy their refuges of lies. I will bring them to the blood of sprinkling; I will give them faith whereby this blood shall be applied to them; I will work in them every grace; I will keep their faith alive; I will cleanse them and drive out all depravity from them, and they shall be presented at last spotless and faultless." This was the one side of the covenant, which is at this very day

being fulfilled and scrupulously kept. As for the other side of the covenant, this was the part of it engaged and covenanted by Christ. He thus declared, and covenanted with his Father: "My Father, on my part I covenant that in the fulness of time I will become man. I will take upon myself the form and nature of the fallen race. I will live in their wretched world, and for my people will I keep the law perfectly. I will work out a spotless righteousness, which shall be acceptable to the demands of thy just and holy law. In due time I will bear the sins of all my people. Thou shalt exact their debts on me; the chastisement of their peace I will endure, and by my stripes they shall be healed. My Father, I covenant and promise that I will be obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. I will magnify thy law, and make it honorable. I will suffer all they ought to have suffered. I will endure the curse of thy law, and all the vials of thy wrath shall be emptied and spent upon my head. I will then rise again; I will ascend into heaven; I will intercede for them at thy right hand; and I will make myself responsible for every one of them, that not one of those whom thou hast given me shall ever be lost, but I will bring all my sheep of whom, by thy blood, thou hast constituted me the shepherd—I will bring every one safe to thee at last." Thus ran the covenant; and now, I think, you have a clear idea of what it was and how it stands—the covenant between God and Christ, between God the Father and God the Spirit, and God the Son, as the covenant head and representative of all God's elect. I have told you, as briefly as I *could*, what were the stipulations of it. You will please to remark, my dear friends, that the covenant is, on one side, perfectly fulfilled. God the Son has paid the debts of all the elect. He has, for us men and for our redemption, suffered the whole of wrath divine. Nothing remaineth now on this side of the question, except that he shall continue to intercede, that he may safely bring all his redeemed to glory.

On the side of the Father this part of the covenant has been fulfilled to countless myriads. God the Father and God the Spirit, have not been behindhand in their divine contract. And mark you, this side shall be as fully and as completely finished

and carried out as the other. Christ can say of what he promised to do, "It is finished!" and the like shall be said by all the glorious covenanters. All for whom Christ died shall be pardoned, all justified, all adopted. The Spirit shall quicken them all, shall give them all faith, shall bring them all to heaven, and they shall, every one of them, without let or hindrance, stand accepted in the beloved, in the day when the people shall be numbered, and Jesus shall be glorified.

3. And now, having seen who were the high contracting parties, and what were the terms of the covenant made between them, let us see what were *the objects of this covenant.* Was this covenant made for every man of the race of Adam? Assuredly not; we discover the secret by the visible. That which is in the covenant is to be seen in due time with the eye and to be heard with the ear. I see multitudes of men perishing, continuing wantonly in their wicked ways, rejecting the offer of Christ, which is presented to them in the gospel day after day, treading under foot the blood of the Son of Man, defying the Spirit who strives with them; I see these men going on from bad to worse, and at last perishing in their sins. I have not the folly to believe that they have any part in the covenant of grace. Those who die impenitent, the multitudes who reject the Saviour, are clearly proved to have no part and no lot in the sacred covenant of divine grace; for if they were interested in that, there would be certain marks and evidences which would show us this. We should find that in due time in this life they would be brought to repentance, would be washed in the Saviour's blood, and would be saved. The covenant—to come at once straight to the matter, however offensive the doctrine may be—the covenant has relationship to the elect and none besides. Does this offend you? Be ye offended even more. What said Christ? "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me: for they are thine." If Christ prayeth for none but for his chosen, why should ye be angry that ye are also taught from the Word of God that in the covenant there was provision made for the like persons, that they might receive eternal life. As many as shall believe, as many as shall trust in Christ, as many as shall persevere unto the end,

as many as shall enter into the eternal rest, so many and no more are interested in the covenant of divine grace.

4. Furthermore, we have to consider what were the motives of this covenant? Why was the covenant made at all? There was no compulsion or constraint on God. As yet there was no creature. Even could the creature have an influence on the Creator, there was none existing in the period when the covenant was made. We can look nowhere for God's motive in the covenant except it be in himself, for of God it could be said literally in that day, "I am, and there is none beside me." Why then did he make the covenant? I answer, absolute sovereignty dictated it. But why were certain men the objects of it, and why not others? I answer, sovereign grace guided the pen. It was not the merit of man, it was nothing which God foresaw in us, that made him choose many, and leave others to go on in their sins. It was nothing in them, it was sovereignty and grace combined that made the divine choice. If you, my brethren, have a good hope that you are interested in the covenant of grace, you must sing that song—

"What was there in me to merit esteem, or give the Creator delight?
'Twas even so Father I ever must sing, for so it seemed good in thy sight."

"He will have mercy on whom he will have mercy," for it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." His sovereignty elected, and his grace distinguished, and immutability decreed. No motive dictated the election of the individuals, except a motive in himself of love and of divine sovereignty. Doubtless the grand intention of God in making the covenant at all was his own glory; any motive inferior to that would be beneath his dignity. God must find his motives in himself; he has not to look to moths and worms for motives for his deeds. He is the "I AM."

"He sits on no precarious throne,
Nor borrows leave to be."

He doth as he wills in the armies of heaven. Who can stay his hand and say unto him, "What doest thou?" Shall the clay ask

the potter for the motive for his making it into a vessel? Shall the thing formed before its creation dictate to its Creator? No, let God be God, and let man shrink into his native nothingness; and if God exalt him, let him not boast as though God found a reason for the deed in man. He finds his motives in himself. He is self-contained, and findeth nothing beyond nor needeth anything from any but himself. Thus have I, as fully as time permits this morning, discussed the first point concerning the covenant. May the Holy Spirit lead us into this sublime truth.

II. But now, in the second place, we come to notice ITS EVERLASTING CHARACTER. It is called an everlasting covenant.

1. And here you observe at once its *antiquity*. The covenant of grace is the oldest of all things. It is sometimes a subject of great joy to me to think that the covenant of grace is older than the covenant of works. The covenant of works had a beginning, but the covenant of grace had not; and blessed be God the covenant of works has its end, but the covenant of grace shall stand fast when heaven and earth shall pass away. The antiquity of the covenant of grace demands our grateful attention. It is a truth which tends to elevate the mind. I know of no doctrine more grand than this. It is the very soul and essence of all poetry, and in sitting down and meditating upon it, I do confess my spirit has sometimes been ravished with delight. Can you conceive the idea that before all things God thought of you; that when as yet he had not made his mountains, he had thought of thee, poor puny worm? Before the magnificent constellations began to shine, and ere the great centre of the world had been fixed, and all the mighty planets and divers worlds had been made to revolve around it, then had God fixed the centre of his covenant, and ordained the number of those lesser stars which should revolve round that blessed centre, and derive light therefrom. Why, when one is taken up with some grand conceptions of the boundless universe, when with the astronomers we fly through space, when we find it without end, and the starry hosts without number, does it not seem marvellous that God should give poor insignificant man the preference beyond even the whole universe besides? Oh, this cannot make us proud, because it is

a divine truth; but it must make us feel happy. Oh, believer, you think yourself nothing; but God does not think so of you. Men despise you, but God remembered you before he made anything. The covenant of love which he made with his Son on your behalf, is older than the hoary ages, and if ye fly back when as yet time had not begun, before those massive rocks that bear the marks of grey old age upon them had begun to be deposited, he had loved and chosen you, and made a covenant on your behalf. Remember well these ancient things of the eternal hills.

2. Then, again, it is an everlasting covenant from its *sureness*. Nothing is everlasting which is not secure. Man may erect his structures and think they may last forever; but the Tower of Babel has crumbled, and the very Pyramids bear signs of ruin. Nothing which man has made is everlasting, because he cannot insure it against decay. But as for the covenant of grace, well did David say of it, "It is ordered in all things and sure." There is not an "if" or a "but" in the whole of it from beginning to end. Free-will hates God's "shalls" and "wills," and likes man's "ifs" and "buts," but there are no "ifs" and "buts" in the covenant of grace. Thus the tenure runs: "I will" and "they shall." Jehovah swears it and the Son fulfils it. It is—it must be true. It must be sure, for "I AM" determines. "Hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" It is a sure covenant. I have sometimes said, if any man were about to build a bridge or a house, if he would leave me just one single stone or one timber to put where I liked, I would undertake that his house would fall down. Let me, if there is any one about to construct a bridge, have just simply the placing of one stone—I will select which stone it shall be—and I will defy him to build a bridge that shall stand. I should simply select the key-stone, and then he might erect whatever he pleased, and it should soon fall. Now, the Arminian's covenant is one that cannot stand, because there are one or two bricks in it that are dependent on the will of man. It is left to the will of the creature whether he will be saved or not. If he will not, there is no constraining influence that can master and overcome his will. There is no promise

that any influence shall be strong enough to overcome him, according to the Arminian. So the question is left to man, and God the mighty Builder—though he put stone on stone, massive as the universe—yet may be defeated by his creature. Out upon such blasphemy! The whole structure, from beginning to end, is in the hand of God. The very terms and conditions of that covenant are become its seals and guarantees, seeing that Jesus has fulfilled them all. Its full accomplishment in every jot and title is sure, and must be fulfilled by Christ Jesus, whether man will or man will not. It is not the creature's covenant, it is the Creator's. It is not man's covenant, it is the Almighty's covenant, and he will carry it out and perform it, the will of man notwithstanding. For this is the very glory of grace—that man hates to be saved, that he is at enmity to him, yet God will have him redeemed—that God's covenant is, "you shall," and man's intention is, "I will not," and God's "shall" conquers man's "I will not." Almighty grace rides victoriously over the neck of free-will, and leads it captive in glorious captivity to the all-conquering power of irresistible grace and love. It is a sure covenant, and therefore deserves the title of everlasting.

3. Furthermore, it is not only sure, but it is *immutable*. If it were not immutable, it could not be everlasting. That which changes passes away. We may be quite sure that anything that has the word "change" on it, will sooner or later die, and be put away as a thing of nought. But in the covenant everything is immutable. Whatever God has established must come to pass, and not word, or line, or letter can be altered. Whatever the Spirit voweth shall be done, and whatever God the Son promised hath been fulfilled, and shall be consummated at the day of his appearing. Oh, if we could believe that the sacred lines could be erased—that the covenant could be blotted and blurred, why, then, my dear friends, we might lie down in despair. I have heard it said by some preachers, that when the Christian is holy, he is in the covenant; that when he sins, he is crossed out again; that when he repents, he is put in again; and then, if he falls, he is scratched out once more: and so he goes in and out of the door, as he would in and out of his own

house. He is sometimes the child of God, and sometimes the child of the devil—sometimes an heir of heaven, and anon an heir of hell. And I know one man who went so far as to say that although a man might have persevered through grace for sixty years, yet should he fall away the last year of his life—if he should sin and die so, he would perish everlastingly, and all his faith, and all the love which God had manifested to him in the days gone by would go for nothing. I am very happy to say that such a notion of God is just the very notion I have of the devil. I could not believe in such a God, and could not bow down before him. A God that loves to-day and hates to morrow; a God that gives a promise, and yet foreknows after all that man shall not see the promise fulfilled; a God that forgives and punishes—that justifies and afterwards executes—is a God that I cannot endure. He is not the God of the Scriptures I am certain, for *he* is immutable, just, holy, and true; and having loved his own, he will love them to the end; and if he hath given a promise to any man, the promise shall be kept, and that man once in grace, is in grace forever, and shall without fail by and-bye enter into glory.

4. And then to finish up this point. The covenant is everlasting, because *it will never run itself out.* It will be fulfilled, but it will stand firm. When Christ hath completed all, and brought every believer to heaven; when the Father hath seen all his people gathered in—the covenant it is true, will come to a consummation, but not to a conclusion, for thus the covenant runs: The heirs of grace shall be blessed forever, and as long as "forever" lasts, this everlasting covenant will demand the happiness, the security, the glorification of every object of it.

III. I conclude by the sweetest and most precious portion of the doctrine—THE BLOOD OF THE EVERLASTING COVENANT. The blood of Christ stands in a four-fold relationship to the covenant.

1. *With regard to Christ*, his precious blood shed in Gethsemane, in Gabbatha, and Galgotha, is *the fulfilment* of the covenant. By this blood, sin is cancelled; by Jesus' agonies, justice is satisfied; by his death, the law is honored; and by that

precious blood, in all its mediatorial efficacy, and in all its cleansing power, Christ fulfils all that he stipulated to do on the behalf of his people towards God. Oh, believer, look to the blood of Christ, and remember that there is Christ's part of the covenant carried out. And now, there remains nothing to be fulfilled but God's part, there is nothing for thee to do—Jesus has done it all; there is nothing for free will to supply; Christ has done everything that God can demand. The blood is the fulfilment of the debtor's side of the covenant, and now God becometh bound by his own solemn oath to show grace and mercy to all whom Christ has redeemed by his blood.

2. With regard to the blood, in another respect, it is *to God the Father the bond* of the covenant. When I see Christ dying on the cross, I see the everlasting God from that time, if I may use the term of him who ever must be free, bound by his own oath and covenant to carry out every stipulation. Does the covnant say, "A new heart will I give thee, and a right spirit will I put within thee? It must be done, for Jesus died, and Jesus' death is the seal of the covenant. Does it say, "I will sprinkle pure water upon them and they shall be clean; from all their iniquities will I cleanse them?" Then it must be done, for Christ has fulfilled his part. And therefore, now we can present the covenant no more as a thing of doubt, but as our claim on God through Christ, and coming humbly on our knees, pleading that covenant, our Heavenly Father will not deny the promises contained therein, but will make every one of them yea and amen to us through the blood of Jesus Christ.

3. Then, again, the blood of the covenant has relation *to us as the objects* of the covenant, and that is its third light; it is not only a fulfilment as regards Christ, and a bond as regards his Father, but it is *an evidence* as regards ourselves. And here, dear brothers and sisters, let me speak affectionately to you. Are you relying wholly upon the blood? Has his blood—the precious blood of Christ—been laid to your conscience? Have you seen your sins pardoned, through his blood? Have you received forgiveness of sins through the blood of Jesus? Are you glorying in his sacrifice, and is his cross your only hope and refuge? Then you are in the covenant. Some men want to

know whether they are elect. We cannot tell them unless they tell us this. Dost thou believe? Is thy faith fixed on the precious blood? Then thou art in the covenant. And oh, poor sinner, if thou hast nothing to recommend thee; if thou art standing back, and saying, "I dare not come! I am afraid! I am not in the covenant!" still Christ bids thee come. "Come unto *me*," saith he. "If thou canst not come to the covenant Father, come to the covenant Surety. Come unto *me* and I will give thee rest." And when thou hast come to him, and his blood has been applied to thee, doubt not but that in the red roll of election stands thy name. Canst thou read thy name in the bloody characters of a Saviour's atonement? Then shalt thou read it one day in the golden letters of the Father's election! He that believeth is elected. The blood is the symbol, the token, the earnest, the surety, the seal of the covenant of grace to thee. It must ever be the telescope through which thou canst look to see the things that are afar of. Thou canst not see thy election with the naked eye, but through the blood of Christ thou canst see it clear enough. Trust thou in the blood, poor sinner, and then the blood of the everlasting covenant is a proof that thou art an heir of heaven.

4. Lastly, the blood stands in a relationship *to all three*, and here I may add, that *the blood is the glory of all*. To the Son, it is the fulfilment; to the Father, the bond; to the sinner, the evidence, and to all—Father, Son and sinner—it is the common glory and the common boast. In this the Father is well pleased; in this the Son also, with joy, looks down and sees the purchase of his agonies—and in this must the sinner ever find his comfort and his everlasting song—"Jesus, thy blood and righteousness are my glory, my song, forever and ever!"

And now, my dear hearers, I have one question to ask, and I have done. Have you the hope that you are in the covenant? Have you put your trust in the blood? Remember, though you imagine, perhaps, from what I have been saying, that the gospel is restricted, that the gospel is freely preached to all. The decree is limited, but the good news is as wide as the world. The good spell, the good news, is as wide as the universe. I tell it to every creature under heaven, because I am told to do so. The

secret of God, which is to deal with the application, that is restricted to God's chosen ones, but not the message, for that is to be proclaimed to all nations. Now, thou hast heard the gospel many and many a time in thy life. It runs thus—"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Dost thou believe that? And is this thy hope—something like this: "I am a sinner. I trust Christ has died for me; I put my trust in the merit of his blood, and, sink or swim, I have no other hope but this."

Thou hast heard it; hast thou received it in thy heart, and laid hold on it? then thou art one of those in the covenant. And why should election frighten thee? If thou hast chosen Christ, depend upon it he has chosen thee. If thy tearful eye is looking to him, then his omniscient eye has long looked on thee; if thy heart lovest him, his heart loves thee better than ever thou canst love; and if now thou art saying, "My father, thou shalt be the guide of my youth," I will tell thee a secret—he has been thy guide, and has brought thee to be what thou now art, a humble seeker, and he will be thy guide and bring thee safe at last. But art thou a proud, boastful, free-willer, saying, "I will repent and believe whenever I choose; I have as good a right to be saved as anybody, for I do my duty as well as others, and I shall doubtless get my reward"—if you are claiming a universal atonement, which is to be received at the option of man's will, go and claim it, and you will be disappointed in your claim. You will find God will not deal with you on that ground at all, but will say, "Get thee hence, I never knew thee. He that cometh not to me through the Son, cometh not at all." I believe the man who is not willing to submit to the electing love and sovereign grace of God, has great reason to question whether he is a Christian at all, for the spirit that kicks against that is the spirit of the unhumbled, unrenewed heart. May God take away the enmity out of your heart to his own precious truth, and reconcile you to it, and then reconcile you to himself through THE BLOOD of his Son, which is the bond and seal of the everlasting covenant. AMEN.

SERMON XIV.

A REVIVAL SERMON.

[The Revival Sermon was preached in Exeter Hall, Jan. 29, 1860, in the midst of a gracious visitation of the Spirit, while tokens of still more abundant blessing cheered the sowers and the reapers. It was published and widely circulated. The author says of it, "The Revival Sermon has met with great acceptance from warm hearts, and has therefore had an extensive sale."]

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt."—Amos, ix. 13.

God's promises are not exhausted when they are fulfilled, for when once performed, they stand just as good as they did before, and we may await a second accomplishment of them. Man's promises even at the best, are like a cistern which holds but a temporary supply; but God's promises are as a fountain, never emptied, ever overflowing, so that you may draw from them the whole of that which they apparently contain, and they shall be still as full as ever. Hence it is that you will frequently find a promise containing both a literal and spiritual meaning. In the literal meaning it has already been fulfilled to the letter; in the spiritual meaning it shall also be accomplished, and not a jot or tittle of it shall fail. This is true of the particular promise which is before us. Originally, as you are aware, the land of

Canaan was very fertile; it was a land that flowed with milk and honey. Even where no tillage had been exercised upon it the land was so fruitful, that the bees who sucked the sweetness from the wild flowers produced such masses of honey that the very woods were sometimes flooded with it. It was "A land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey." When, however, the children of Israel thrust in the ploughshare and began to use the divers arts of agriculture, the land became exceedingly fat and fertile, yielding so much corn, that they could export through the Phœnicians both corn, and wine, and oil, even to the pillars of Hercules, so that Palestine became, like Egypt, the granary of the nations.

It is somewhat surprising to find that now the land is barren, that its valleys are parched, and that the miserable inhabitants gather miserable harvests from the arid soil. Yet the promise stands true, that one day Palestine shall be as rich and fruitful as ever it was. There be those who understand the matter, who assert that if once the rigor of the Turkish rule could be removed, if men were safe from robbers, if the man who sowed could reap, and keep the corn which his own industry had gathered, the land might yet again laugh in the midst of the nations, and become the joyous mother of children. There is no reason *in the soil* for its barrenness. It is simply the neglect that has been brought on, from the fact, that when a man has been industrious, his savings are taken from him by the hand of rapine, and the very harvest for which he toiled is often reaped by another, and his own blood spilt upon the soil.

But, my dear friends, while this promise will doubtless be carried out, and every word of it shall be verified, so that the hill-tops of that country shall again bear the vine, and the land shall flow with wine, yet, I take it, this is more fully a spiritual than a temporal promise; and I think that the beginning of its fulfilment is now to be discerned, and we shall see the Lord's good hand upon us, so that the ploughman shall overtake the reaper, the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt.

First, I shall this morning endeavor to explain my text as *a promise of revival:* secondly, I shall take it as *a lesson of doc-*

trine; then as *a stimulus for Christian exertion;* and I shall conclude with *a word or two of warning* to those whose hearts are not given to Christ.

I. A GREAT PROMISE OF SPIRITUAL REVIVAL. And here, in looking attentively at the text, we shall observe several very pleasant things.

1. In the first place, we notice a promise of *surprising ingathering.* According to the metaphor here used, the harvest is to be so great that, before the reapers can have fully gathered it in, the ploughman shall begin to plough for the next crop—while the abundance of fruit shall be so surprising that before the treader of grapes can have trodden out all the juice of the vine, the time shall come for sowing seed. One season, by reason of the abundant fertility, shall run into another. Now you all know, beloved, what this means in the church. It prophecies that in the Church of Christ we shall see the most abundant ingathering of souls. Pharaoh's dream has been enacted again in the last century. About a hundred years ago, if I may look back in my dream, I might have seen seven ears of corn upon one stalk, rank and strong; anon, the time of plenty went away, and I have seen, and you have seen, in your own lifetime, the seven ears of corn thin and withered in the east wind. The seven ears of withered corn have eaten up and devoured the seven ears of fat corn, and there has been a sore famine in the land. Lo, I see in Whitfield's time, seven bullocks coming up from the river, fat and well-favoured, and since then we have lived to see seven lean kine come up from the same river; and lo! the seven lean kine have eaten up the seven fat kine, yet have they been none the better for all that they have eaten.

We read of such marvellous revivals a hundred years ago, that the music of their news has not ceased to ring in our ears; but we have seen, alas, a season of lethargy, of soul poverty among the saints, and of neglect among the ministers of God. The product of the seven years has been utterly consumed, and the Church has been none the better. Now, I take it, however, we are about to see the seven fat years again. God is about to send times of surprising fertility to his Church. When a ser-

mon has been preached in these modern times, if one sinner has been converted by it, we have rejoiced with a suspicious joy; for we have thought it something amazing. But, brethren, where we have seen one converted, we may yet see hundreds; where the Word of God has been powerful to scores, it shall be blessed to thousands; and where hundreds in past years have seen it, nations shall be converted to Christ. There is no reason why we should not see all the good that God hath given us multiplied a hundred fold; for there is sufficient vigour in the seed of the Lord to produce a far more plentiful crop than any we have yet gathered. God the Holy Ghost is not stinted in his power. When the sower went forth to sow his seed, some of it fell on good soil, and it brought forth fruit, some twenty fold, some thirty fold, but it is written, "*Some a hundred fold.*" Now, we have been sowing this seed, and thanks be to God, I have seen it bring forth twenty and thirty fold; but I do expect to see it bring forth a hundred fold. I do trust that our harvest shall be so heavy, that while we are taking in the harvest, it shall be time to sow again; that prayer meetings shall be succeeded by the enquiry of souls as to what they shall do to be saved, and ere the enquirers' meeting shall be done, it shall be time again to preach, again to pray; and then, ere that is over, there shall be again another influx of souls, the baptismal pool shall be again stirred, and hundreds of converted men shall flock to Christ.

Oh! we never can be contented with going on as the churches have been during the last twenty years. I would not be censorious, but solemnly in my own heart I do not believe that the ministers of our churches have been free from the blood of men. I would not say a hard word if I did not feel compelled to do it, but I am constrained to remind our brethren that let God send what revival he may, it will not exonerate them from the awful guilt that rests upon them of having been idle and dilatory during the last twenty years. Let all be saved who live *now*; what about those that have perished while we have been sleeping? Let God gather in multitudes of sinners, but who shall answer for the blood of those men who have been swept into eternity while we have been going on in our canon-

cal fashion, content to go along the path of propriety, and walk around the path of dull routine, but never weeping for sinners, never agonizing for souls. All the ministers of Christ are not awake yet; but the most of them are, There has come a glad time of arousing, the trumpet has been set to their mouth, and the people have heard the sound also, and times of refreshing are come from the presence of the Lord our God; but they have not come before they were needed, for much did we require them; otherwise surely the Church of Christ would have died away into dead formality, and if her name had been remembered, it would have been as a shame and a hissing upon the face of the earth.

2. The promise, then, seems to convey also the idea of *amazing rapidity*. Notice how quickly the crops succeed each other. Between the harvest and the ploughing there is a season even in our country; in the east it is a longer period. But here you find that no sooner has the reaper ceased his work, or scarce has he ceased it, ere the ploughman follows at his heels. This is a rapidity that is contrary to the course of nature; still it is quite consistent with grace. Our old Baptist churches in the country treat young converts with what they call summering and wintering. Any young believer who wants to join the church in summer, must wait till the winter, and he is put off from time to time, till it is sometimes five or six years before they admit him; they want to try him, and see whether he is fit to unite with such pious souls as they are. Indeed, among us all there is a tendency to imagine that conversion must be a slow work—that as the snail creeps slowly on its way, so must grace move very leisurely in the heart of man. We have come to believe that there is more true divinity in stagnant pools than in lightning flashes. We cannot believe for a moment in a quick method of travelling to the kingdom of heaven. Every man who goes there must go on crutches and limp all the way; but as for the swift beasts, as for the chariots whose axles are hot with speed, we do not quite understand and comprehend that.

Now, mark; here is a promise given of a revival, and when that revival shall be fulfilled, this will be one of the signs of it—the marvellous growth in grace of those who are converted.

The young convert shall that very day come forward to make a profession of his faith; perhaps before a week has passed over his head you will hear him publicly defending the cause of Christ, and ere many months have gone you shall see him standing up to tell to others what God has done for his soul. There is no need that the pulse of the Church should forever be so slow. The Lord can quicken her heart, so that her pulse shall throb as rapidly as the pulse of time itself; her floods shall be as the rushing of the Kishon when it swept the hosts of Sisera in its fury. As the fire from heaven shall the Spirit rush from the skies, and as the sacrifice which instantly blazed to heaven, so shall the Church burn with holy and glorious ardor. She shall no longer drive heavily with her wheels torn away, but as the chariot of Jehu, the son of Nimshi, she shall devour the distance in her haste. That seems to me to be one of the promises of the text—the rapidity of the work of grace, so that the plougher shall overtake the reaper.

3. But a third blessing is very manifest here. Notice the *activity of labor* which is mentioned in the text. God does not promise that there shall be fruitful crops without labor; but here we find mention made of ploughmen, reapers, treaders of grapes, and sowers of seed; and all these persons are girt with singular energy. The ploughman does not wait, because, saith he, the season has not yet come for me to plough; but seeing that God is blessing the land, he has his plough ready, and no sooner is one harvest shouted home than he is ready to plough again. And so with the sower; he has not to prepare his basket and to collect his seed; but while he hears the shouts of the vintage, he is ready to go out to work.

Now, my brethren, one sign of a true revival, and, indeed, an essential part of it, is the increased activity of God's laborers. Why, time was when our ministers thought that preaching twice on Sunday was the hardest work to which a man could be exposed. Poor souls, they could not think of preaching on a week-day! or if there was once a lecture, they had bronchitis, were obliged to go to Jerusalem, and lay by, for they would soon be dead if they were to work too hard. I never believed in the hard work of preaching yet. We find ourselves able to

preach ten or twelve times a week, and find that we are the stronger for it; that, in fact, it is the healthiest and most blessed exercise in the world. But the cry used to be, that our ministers were hardly done by; they were to be pampered and laid aside, done up in velvet, and only to be brought out to do a little work occasionally, and then be pitied when the task was over. I do not hear anything of that now-a-days. I meet with my brethren in the ministry who are able to preach day after day, and are not half so fatigued as they were; and I saw a brother minister this week who has been having meetings in his church every day, and the people have been so earnest that they will keep him very often from six o'clock in the evening to two in the morning. "Oh!" said one of the members, "our minister will kill himself." "Not he," said I, "that is the kind of work that will kill no man. It is preaching to a sleepy congregation that kills good ministers, but not preaching to earnest people" So, when I saw him, his eyes were sparkling, and I said to him, "Brother, you don't look like a man who is being killed." "Killed! my brother," said he; "why I am living twice as much as I did before; I was never so happy, never so hearty, never so well." Said he, "I sometimes lack my rest, and want my sleep, when my people keep me up so late; but it will never hurt me. Indeed," he said, "I should like to die of such a disease as that—the disease of being so greatly blessed." There was a specimen before me of the ploughman who overtook the reaper; of one who sowed seed, who was treading on the heels of the men who were gathering in the vintage.

And the like activity we have lived to see in the Church of Christ. Did you ever know so much doing in the Christian world before? There are grey-headed men around me who have known the Church of Christ sixty years, and I think they can bear me witness that they never knew such life, such vigor and activity as there is at present. Everybody seems to have a mission, and everybody is doing it. There may be a great many sluggards, but they do not come across my path now. I used to be always kicking at them, and always being kicked for doing so. But now there is nothing to kick at—every one is at work—Church of England, Independents, Methodists, and Bap-

tists—there is not a single squadron that is behindhand; they have all their guns ready, and are standing shoulder to shoulder, ready to make a tremendous charge against the common enemy. This leads me to hope, since I see the activity of God's ploughmen and vine-dressers, that there is a great revival coming—that God will bless us, and that right early.

4. We have not yet, however, exhausted our text. The latter part of it says, "The mountains shall drop sweet wine." It is not a likely place for wine upon the mountains. There may be freshets and cataracts leaping down their sides; but whoever saw fountains of red wine streaming from rocks, or gushing out from the hills? Yet here we are told that, "The mountains shall drop sweet wine;" by which we are to understand that conversions shall take place in unusual quarters. Brethren, this day is this promise literally fulfilled to us. I have this week seen what I never saw before. It has been my lot these last six years to preach to crowded congregations, and to see many, many souls brought to Christ; it has been no unusual thing for us to see the greatest and noblest of the land listening to the word of God; but this week I have seen, I repeat, what mine eyes have never before beheld, used as I am to extraordinary things. I have seen the people of Dublin, without exception, from the highest to the lowest, crowd in to hear the gospel. I have known that my congregation has been constituted in a considerable measure of Roman Catholics, and I have seen them listening to the Word with as much attention as though they had been Protestants. I have seen men who never heard the gospel before, military men, whose tastes and habits were not likely to be those of the Puritanic minister, who have nevertheless sat to listen; nay, they have come again—have made it a point to find the place where they could hear the best—have submitted to be crowded, that they might hear the Word, and I have never before seen such intense eagerness of the people to listen to the gospel.

I have heard, too, cheering news of work going on in the most unlikely quarters—men who could not speak without larding their conversation richly with oaths—have nevertheless come to hear the Word; they have listened, and have been convinced,

and if the impression does not die away, there has been something done for them which they will not forget even in eternity. But the most pleasing thing I have seen is this, and I must tell it to you. Hervey once said, "Each floating ship, a floating hell." Of all classes of men, the sailor has been supposed to be the man least likely to be reached by the gospel. In crossing over from Holyhead to Dublin and back—two excessively rough passages—I spent the most pleasant hours that I ever spent. The first vessel that I entered, I found my hands very heartily shaken by the sailors. I thought, "What can these sailors know of me?" and they were calling me "*brother*." Of course, I felt that I was their brother too; but I did not know how they came to talk to me in that way. It was not generally the way for sailors to call ministers "brother." There was the most officious attention given, and when I made the inquiry, "What makes you so kind?" "Why," said one, "because I love your Master, the Lord Jesus." I inquired, and found that out of the whole crew there were but three unconverted men; that though the most of them had been before without God, and without Christ, yet by a sudden visitation of the Spirit of God they had all been converted. I talked to many of these men, and more spiritual, heavenly-minded men I never yet saw. They have a prayer meeting every morning before the boat starts, and another prayer-meeting after she comes to port; and on Sundays, when they lay-to off Kingstown or Holyhead, a minister comes on board and preaches the gospel; the cabins are crowded; service is held on deck when it can be; and, said an eye-witness to me, "The minister preaches very earnestly, but I should like you to hear the men pray; I never heard such praying before," said he, "they pray with such power as only a sailor can pray." My heart was lifted up with joy, to think of a ship being made a floating church—a very Bethel for God.

When I came back by another ship I did not expect to see the like; but it was precisely the same. The same work had been going on. I walked among them and talked to them. They all knew me. One man took out of his pocket an old leather covered book in Welsh—"Do you know the likeness of that man in front?" said he, "Yes," I said, "I think I do: do you

read these sermons!" "Yes, sir," replied he, "we have had your sermons on board this ship, and I read them aloud as often as I can. If we have a fine passage coming over, I get a few around me, and read them a sermon." Another man told me a story of a gentleman who stood laughing when a hymn was being sung; and one of the men proposed that they should pray for him. They did, and that man was suddenly smitten down, and began on the quay to cry for mercy, and plead with God for pardon. "Ah! Sir," said the sailors, "we have the best proof that there is a God here, for we have seen this crew marvellously brought to a knowledge of the truth; and here we are, joyful and happy men, serving the Lord."

Now, what shall we say of this, but that the mountains drop sweet wine? The men who were loudest with their oaths, are now loudest with their songs; those who were the most darling children of Satan, have become the most earnest advocates of the truth: for mark you, once get sailors converted, and there is no end to the good they can do. Of all men who can preach well, sailors are the best. The sailor has seen the wonders of God in the deep; the hardy Tar has got a heart that is not made of such cold stuff as many of the hearts of landsmen; and when that heart is once touched, it gives great big beats; it sends great pulses of energy right through his whole frame; and with his zeal and energy what may he not do, God helping him and blessing him.

5. This seems to be in the text—that a time of revival shall be followed by very extraordinary conversion. But albeit that in the time of revival, grace is put in extraordinary places, and singular individuals are converted, yet these are not a bit behind the usual converts; for if you notice the text does not say, "the mountains shall drop wine" merely, but they "shall drop *sweet* wine." It does not say that the hills shall send forth little streams; but *all the hills shall melt.* When sinners, profligate and debauched persons, are converted to God, we say, "Well, it is a wonderful thing, but I do not suppose they will be very first class Christians." The most wonderful thing is, that these are the best Christians alive; that the wine which God brings from the hills is sweet wine; that when the hills do melt they

all melt. The most extraordinary ministers of any time, have been most extraordinary sinners before conversion.

We might never have had a John Bunyan, if it had not have been for the profanity of Elstow Green; we might never have heard of a John Newton, if it had not have been for his wickedness on shipboard. I mean he would not have known the depths of Satan, nor the trying experience, nor even the power of divine grace, if he had not been suffered wildly to stray, and then wondrously to be brought back. These great sinners are not a whit behind those who have been trained under pious influences, and so have been brought into the Church. Always in revival you will find this to be the case, that the converts are not inferior to the best of the converts of ordinary seasons—that the Romanist, and the men who have never heard the gospel, when they are converted, are as true in their faith, as hearty in their love, as accurate in their knowledge, and as zealous in their efforts, as the best of persons who have ever been brought to Christ. "The mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt."

II. WHAT IS THE DOCTRINAL LESSON WHICH IS TAUGHT IN OUR TEXT: AND WHAT IS TAUGHT TO US BY A REVIVAL? I think it is just this,—that God is absolute monarch of the hearts of men. God does not say here *if men are willing;* but he gives an absolute promise of a blessing. As much as to say, "*I* have the key of men's hearts; *I* can induce the ploughman to overtake the reaper; *I* am master of the soil—however hard and rocky it may be *I* can break it, and *I* can make it fruitful." When God promises to bless his Church and to save sinners, he does not add, "if the sinners be willing to be saved?" No, great God! thou leadest free will in sweet captivity, and thy free grace is all triumphant. Man *has* a free will, and God does not violate it; but the free will is sweetly bound with fetters of the divine love till it becomes more free than it ever was before. The Lord, when he means to save sinners, does not stop to ask them whether they mean to be saved, but like a rushing mighty wind the divine influence sweeps away every obstacle; the unwilling heart bends before the potent gale of grace, and sinners that would not yield are made to yield by God. I know this,

if the Lord willed it, there is no man so desperately wicked here this morning, that he would not be made now to seek for mercy, however infidel he might be; however rooted in his prejudices against the gospel, Jehovah hath but to will it, and it is done. into thy dark heart, O thou who hast never seen the light, would the light stream; if he did but say, "Let there be light," there would be light. Thou mayst bend thy fist and lift up thy mouth against Jehovah; but he is thy master yet—thy master to destroy thee, if thou goest on in thy wickedness; but thy master to save thee now, to change thy heart and turn thy will, as he turneth the rivers of water.

If it were not for this doctrine, I wonder where the ministry would be. Old Adam is too strong for young Melancthon. The power of our preaching is nought—it can do nothing in the conversion of men by itself; men are hardened, obdurate, indifferent; but the power of grace is greater than the power of eloquence, or the power of earnestness, and once let that power be put forth, and what can stand against it? Divine Omnipotence is the doctrine of a revival. We may not see it in ordinary days, by reason of the coldness of our hearts; but we *must* see it when these extraordinary works of grace are wrought. Have you never heard the Eastern fables of the dervish, who wished to teach a young prince the existence of a God! The young prince could not see any proof of the Existence of a First Cause: so the dervish brought a little plant and set it before him, and in his sight that little plant grew up, blossomed, brought forth fruit, and became a towering tree in an hour. The young man lifted up his hands in wonder, and he said, "God must have done this." "Oh, but," said the teacher, thou sayest, "God has done this, because it is done in an hour: hath he not done it, when it is accomplished in twenty years?" It was the same work in both cases; it was only the rapidity that astonished his pupil.

So, brethren, when we see the Church gradually built up and converted, we lose the sense perhaps of a present God; but when the Lord causes the tree suddenly to grow from a sapling to a strong tall monarch of the forest, then we say, "This is God." We are all blind and stupid in a measure, and we want

to see these quick upgoings, these extraordinary motions of divine influence, before we will fully understand God's power. Learn, then, O Church of God to-day, this great lesson of the nothingness of man, and the Eternal All of God. Learn, disciples of Jesus, to rest on him: look for your success to *his* power, and while you make your efforts, trust not in your efforts, but in the Lord Jehovah. If ye have progressed slowly, give him thanks for progress: but if now he pleases to give you a marvellous increase, multiply your songs, and sing unto him that worketh all things according to the counsel of his will.

III. I now desire to make the text A STIMULUS FOR FURTHER EXERTION.

The duty of the Church is not to be measured by her success. It is as much the minister's duty to preach the gospel in adverse times as in propitious seasons. We are not to think, if God withholds the dew, that we are to withhold the plough. We are not to imagine that, if unfruitful seasons come, we are therefore to cease from sowing our seed. The Church has to do her duty, even though that duty should bring her no present reward. "If they hear thee not, Son of Man, if they perish, they *shall* perish, but their blood will I not require at thine hands." If we sow the seed, and the birds of the air devour it, we have done what we were commanded to do, and the duty is accepted even though the birds devour the seed. We may expect to see a blessed result, but even if it did not come, we must not cease from duty. But while this is true so far, it must nevertheless be a divine and holy stimulant to a gospel laborer, to know that God is making him successful. And in the present day we have a better prospect of success than we ever had, and we should consequently work the harder.

When a tradesman begins business with a little shop at the corner, he waits awhile to see whether he will have any customers. By-and-bye his little shop is crowded; he has a name; he finds he is making money. What does he do? He enlarges his premises; the back yard is taken in and covered over; there are extra men employed; still the business increases, but he will not invest all his capital in it till he sees to what extent it will

pay. It still increases, and the next house is taken, and perhaps the next: he says, "This is a paying concern, and therefore I will increase it." My dear friends, I am using commercial maxims, but they are common-sense rules. There are, in these days, happy opportunities. There is a noble business to be done for Christ. Where you used to invest a little capital, a little effort, and a little donation, invest more. There never was such heavy interest to be made as now. It shall be paid back in the results cent. per cent.; nay, beyond all that you expected, you shall see God's work prospering. If a farmer knew that a bad year was coming, he would perhaps only sow an acre or two; but if some prophet could tell him, "Farmer, there will be such a harvest next year as there never was," he would say, "I will plough up my grass lands, I will stub up those hedges: every inch of ground I will sow." So do you. There is a wondrous harvest coming. Plough up your headlands; root up your hedges; break up your fallow ground, and sow, even amongst the thorns. Ye know not which shall prosper, this or that; but ye may hope that they shall be alike good. Enlarged effort should always follow an increased hope of success.

Let me give you another encouragement. Recollect that even when this revival comes, an instrumentality will still be wanted. The ploughman is wanted, even after the harvest, and the treader of grapes is wanted, however plentiful the vintage; the greater the success the more need of instrumentality. They began at first to think in the North of Ireland that they could do without ministers; but now that the gospel is spread, never was there such a demand for the preachers of the gospel as now. Proudly men said in their hearts, "God has done this without the intervention of man." I say, they said it proudly, for there is such a thing as proud humility; but God made them stoop. He made them see that, after all, he would bless the Word through his servants—that he would make the ministers of God "mighty to the pulling down of strongholds." Brothers and sisters, you need not think that if better times should come, the world will do without you. You will be wanted. "A man shall be precious as the gold of Ophir." They shall take hold of your skirts, and they shall say, "Tell us what we must do

to be saved." They shall come to your house; they shall ask your prayers; they shall demand your instructions; and you shall find the meanest of the flock become precious as a wedge of gold. The ploughman shall never be so much esteemed as when he follows after the reaper, and the sower of seed never so much valued as when he comes at the heels of those that tread the grapes. The glory which God puts upon instrumentality should encourage you to use it.

And now I beseech you, my dear hearers, inhabitants of this great City, let not this auspicious gale pass away without singular effort. I sometimes fear lest the wind should blow on us, and we should have our sails all furled, and the good ship should not speed. Up with the canvas, now. Oh! put on every stitch of it. Let every effort be used, while God is helping us. Let us be earnest co-workers with him. Methinks I see the clouds floating hither; they have come from the far west, from the shore of America; they have crossed the sea, and the wind has wafted them till the green isle received the showers in its northern extremity. Lo! the clouds are just now passing over Wales, and are refreshing the shires that border on the principality. The rain is falling on Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire, divine grace is distilling, and the clouds are drawing nearer and nearer to us. Mark, my brethren, they tarry not for men, neither stay they for the sons of men. They are floating o'er our heads today. Shall they float away, and shall we still be left as dry as ever. 'Tis yours to bring down the rain, though 'tis God's to send the clouds.

God has sent this day, over this great city, a divine cloud of his grace. Now, ye Elijahs, pray it down! To your knees, believers, to your knees. *You* can bring it down, and only you. "For this thing will I be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them." "Prove me now herewith," saith the Lord of hosts, "and see if I will not open the windows of heaven, and give you such a blessing that you shall not have room to contain it." Will you lose the opportunity, Christians? Will you let men be lost for want of effort? Will you suffer this all-blessed time to roll away unimproved? If so, the Church of one thousand eight hundred and sixty is a craven Church, and is unworthy

of its time; and he among you, men and brethren, that has not an earnest heart to-day, if he be a Christian, is a disgrace to his Christianity. When there are such times as these, if we do not every man of us thrust in the plough, we shall indeed deserve the worst barrenness of soul that can possibly fall upon us. I believe that the Church has often been plagued and vexed by her God, because when God has favored her she has not made a proper use of the favor. "Then," saith he, "I will make thee like Gilboa; on thy mount there shall be no dew; I will bid the clouds that they rain no more rain upon thee; and thou shalt be barren and desolate, till once again I pour out the Spirit from on high. Let us spend this week in special prayer. Let us meet together as often as we can, and plead at the throne; and each man of you in private be mighty with your God, and in public be diligent in your efforts to bring your fellow-men to Christ.

IV. Let me utter one WORD OF WARNING to those of you who know not Christ.

I am aware that I have many here on Sabbath mornings who never were in the habit of attending a place of worship at all. There is many a gentleman here to-day, who would be ashamed in any society, to confess himself a professor of religion. He has never, perhaps for a long time, heard the gospel preached, and now there is a strange sort of fascination that has drawn him here. He came the first time out of curiosity—perhaps to make a joke at the minister's expense; he has found himself enthralled; he does not know how it is, but he has been all this week uneasy, he has been wanting to come again, and when he goes away to-day, he will be watching for next Sabbath. He has not given up his sins, but some how they are not so pleasurable as they used to be. He cannot swear as he did; if an oath comes out, it does not roll out in the round form it used to do; he knows better now. Now, it is to such persons that I speak. My dear friends, allow me to express my hearty joy that you are here, and let me also express the hope that you are here for a purpose you do not as yet understand. God has a special favor to you, I trust, and therefore he has brought you here. I have frequently remarked, that in any revival of religion, it is not often the chil-

dren of pious parents that are brought in, but those who never knew anything of Christ before. The ordinary means are usually blessed to those who constantly attend them; but the express effort, and the extraordinary influence of the Spirit, reach those who were outside the pale of nominal Christians, and made no profession of religion.

I am in hopes it may meet you. But if you should despise the Word which you have heard; if the impression that has been made—and you know it has been made—should die away, one of the most awful regrets you will ever have when you come to your right sense and reason in another world, will be the feeling that you had an opportunity but that you neglected it. I cannot conceive a more doleful wail than that of the man who cries at last in hell, "The harvest is past—*there was a harvest*—the summer is ended—*there was a summer*—and I am not saved." To go to perdition in ordinary times is hell; but to go from under the sound of an earnest ministry, where you are bidden to come to Christ, where you are entreated with honest tears to come to Jesus—to go there after you have been warned, is to go not to hell merely, but *to the very hell of hell.* Oh! my dear hearer, this is a solemn time with you. I pray that God the Holy Spirit may remind you that it may be now or never with you. You may never have another warning, or, if you have it, you may grow so hardened that you may laugh at it and despise it. My brother, I beseech thee, by thine own immortal welfare, stop and think now whether it be worth while to throw away the hallowed opportunity which is now presented to thee. Wilt thou go and dance away thine impressions, or laugh them out of thy soul? Ah! man, thou mayest laugh thyself into hell, but thou canst not laugh thyself out of it.

There is a turning point in each man's life, when his character becomes fixed and settled. That turning point *may* be to-day. It may be that there shall be some solemn seat in this hall, which, if a man knew its history, he would never sit in it—a seat in which a man shall sit and hear the Word, and shall say, "I will not yield; I will resist the impression; I will despise it; I will have my sins, even if I am lost for them." Mark your seat, friend, before you go; make a blood-red stain across it, that

next time we come here we may say, "Here a soul destroyed itself." But I pray the rather that God the Holy Spirit may sweetly whisper in thy heart—"Man, yield, for Jesus invites thee to come to him." Oh, may my Master smile into your face this morning, and say, "I love thy soul—trust me with it. Give up thy sins—turn to me." O Lord Jesus, do it! and men shall not resist thee. Oh! show them thy love, and they must yield. Do it, O thou Crucified One, for thy mercy's sake! Send forth thine Holy Spirit now, and bring the strangers home; and in this hall, grant thou, O Lord, that many hearts may be fully resigned to thy love, and to thy grace! AMEN.

SERMON XV.

SIN IMMEASURABLE.

[The fearful nature, and the limitless extent of sin, are considerations which abundantly justify the fearful punishment with which it is threatened. This subject is specially commended to those who think sin a trifle, and its penalty too severe. The discourse was delivered in Exeter Hall, Feb. 12, 1860, and shows the preacher's method of treating a difficult but most important doctrinal truth.]

"Who can understand his errors."—Psalm xix. 12.

What we know is small when compared with what we know not. The sea of wisdom has cast up a shell or two upon our shore, but its vast depths have never known the footstep of the searcher. Even in natural things we know but the surface of matters. He that has travelled the wide world over, and has descended into its deepest mines, must yet be aware that he has viewed but a part of the mere crust of this world; that as for its vast centre, its mysterious fires and molten secrets, the mind of man hath not as yet conceived them. The astronomer will tell you that the undiscovered stars, the vast mass of worlds form the milky way, and the abundant nebulæ—those grand clusters of unknown worlds, as infinitely exceed the little we can explore, as a mountain exceeds a grain of sand. All the knowledge which the wisest men can possibly attain in a whole life-time, is no more than what the child may take up

from the sea with his tiny cup, compared with the boundless waters which fill their channels to the brim. Why, when we are wisest, we have but come to the threshold of knowledge, we have taken but one step in that race of discovery which we may have to pursue throughout all eternity. This is equally the case with regard to those spiritual things which concern man. We see nothing but the surface. Whether I talk to you of God, of his attributes, of Christ, of his atonement, or of ourselves and our sin, I must confess that as yet we know nothing but the exterior; we cannot comprehend the length, the breadth, the height of any one of these matters.

The subject of this morning—our own sin, and the error of our own heart, is one which we sometimes think we know, but of which we may always be quite sure that we have only begun to learn, and that when we have have learned the most we shall ever know on earth, the question will still be pertinent, "Who can understand his errors?"

This morning I propose first of all, to *explain the question;* then to *impress it upon our hearts;* and lastly we will *learn the lessons which it would teach us.*

I. First, then, let me EXPLAIN THE QUESTION.—"Who can understand his errors?"

We all acknowledge that we have errors. Surely we are not so proud as to imagine ourselves to be perfect. If we pretend to perfection we are utterly ignorant, for every profession of human perfection arises from perfect ignorance. Any notion that we are free from sin should at once discover to us that we abound in it. To vindicate my boast of perfection, I must deny the Word of God, forget the law, and exalt myself above the testimony of truth. Therefore, I say, we are willing to confess that we have many errors, yet who amongst us can understand them? Who knows precisely how far a thing may be an error which we imagine to be a virtue? Who among us can define how much of iniquity is mingled with our uprightness—how much of unrighteousness with our righteousness? Who is able to detect the component parts of every action, so as to see the proportion of motive which would constitute it right or wrong?

He were indeed a crafty man who should be able to anglise an action and divide it into three essential elements which are its component parts. Where we think we are right, who knows but that we may be wrong? Where even with the strictest scrutiny we have arrived at the conclusion that we have done a good thing, who among us is quite sure that he has not been mistaken? May not the apparent good be so marred with evil motives as to become a real evil?

Who again can understand his errors, so as always to detect a fault when it has been committed? The shades of evil are perceptible to God, but not always perceptible to us. Our eye has been so blinded by the fall, the absolute black of sin we can detect, but the shades of its darkness we are unable to discern. And yet the slightest shadow of sin is perceptible to God, and that very shade divides us from the Perfect One, and causes us to be guilty of sin. Who amongst us has that keen method of judging himself, so that he shall be able to discover the first trace of evil? "Who can understand his errors?" Surely no man will claim a wisdom so profound as this.

But to come to more common matters, by which perhaps we may the more understand our text. Who can understand the *number* of his errors? The mightiest mind could not count the sins of a single *day*. As the multitude of sparks from a furnace, so innumerable are the iniquities of one day. We might sooner tell the grains of sand on the sea-shore, than the iniquities of one man's life. A life most purged and pure is still as full of sin as the sea is full of salt. And who is he that can weigh the salt of the sea, or can detect it as it mingles with every fluid particle? But if he could do this, he could not tell how vast an amount of evil saturates our entire life, and how innumerable are those deeds, and thoughts, and words of disobedience, which have cast us out from the presence of God, and caused him to abhor the creatures which his own hands have made.

Again, even if we could tell the number of human sins, who, in the next place, could estimate their *guilt?* Before God's mind the guilt of one sin, and such an one as we foolishly call a little one—the guilt of one sin merits his eternal displeasure.

Until that one iniquity be washed out with blood, God cannot accept the soul and take it as his own offspring. Though he has made man, and is infinitely benevolent, yet his sense of justice is so stern, and inflexible, that from his presence he must drive out his dearest child if one single sin should remain unforgiven. Who then amongst us can tell the guilt of guilt, the heinousness of that ungrateful rebellion which man has commenced and carried on against his wise and gracious Creator. Sin, like hell, is a bottomless pit! Oh, brethren, there never lived a man yet who really knew how guilty he was; for if such a being could be fully conscious of all his own guilt, he would carry perdition within him. Nay, I often think that scarcely can the lost know all the guilt of their iniquity, or else even their furnace might be heated seven times hotter, and Tophet's streams must be enlarged to an unmeasurable depth. The hell which is contained in a single evil thought is unutterable and unimaginable. God only knows the blackness, the horror of darkness, which is condensed into the thought of evil.

And then again, I think our text would convey to us this idea. Who can understand the peculiar *aggravation* of his own transgression? Now, answering the question for myself, I feel that as a minister of Christ I cannot understand my errors. Placed where multitudes listen to the Word from my lips, my responsibilities are so tremendous that, the moment I think of them, a mountain presses upon my soul. There have been times when I have wished to imitate Jonah and take ship and flee away from the work which God has thrust upon me; for I am conscious that I have not served him as I ought. When I have preached most earnestly, I go to my chamber and repent that I have preached in so heartless a manner. When I have wept over your souls, when I have agonized in prayer, I have yet been conscious that I have not wrestled with God as I ought to have wrestled, and that I have not felt for your souls as I ought to feel. The errors which a man may commit in the ministry are incalculable. There can be no curse too heavy to be hurled upon the head of that man who leads others astray when he ought to guide them in the path of peace, or who deals with sacred things as if they were matters of no importance. I bring here any

minister of Christ that lives, and if he be a man really filled with the Holy Spirit, he will tell you that when he is bowed down with the solemnity of his office, he would give up the work if he dare; that if it were not for something beyond, mysterious impulses that drive him forward, he would take his hand from the plough and leave the field of toil. Lord have mercy upon thy ministers, for, beyond all other men, we need mercy.

And now I single out any member of my congregation, and say whatever be your position in life, whatever your education, or the peculiar providences through which you have passed, I will insist upon it that there is something special about your case which makes your sin such sin that you cannot understand how vile it is. Perhaps you have had a pious mother who wept over you in your childhood, and dedicated you to God when you were in your cradle. Your sin is doubly sin. There is about it a scarlet hue which is not to be discovered in an ordinary criminal. You have been directed from your youth up in the way of righteousness, and if you have gone astray, every step you have taken has been not a *step* to ruin, but a *stride* thither. *You* do not sin so cheaply as others. Other men's scores run up fast; but where there are pence put down for other sinners there are pounds put down for you, because you know your duty but you do it not. He that breaks through a mother's bosom to hell goes to its lowest depths.

Or you may never know this to account for; but you may have an equal aggravation. You have been at sea, sir. Many times you have been in danger of being shipwrecked. You have had miraculous escapes. Now, every one of these shipwrecks has been a warning to you. God has brought you to the gates of death, and you have promised that if he would but save your wretched soul, that you would lead a fresh life—that you would begin to serve your Maker. You have lied to your God. Your sins, before you uttered that vow, were evil enough; but now you break not only the law but your own covenant which you voluntarily made with God in the hour of sickness. You have, some of you, perhaps, been thrown from a horse, or have been attacked by fever, or in other ways have been brought to the very gates of the grave. What solemnity is attached to

your life now! He that rode in the charge at Balaklava, and yet came back alive—saved alive where hundreds died—should from that time consider himself to be a God's man, saved by a singular Providence for singular ends. But you too have had your escapes, if not quite so wonderful, yet certainly quite as special instances of God's goodness. And now, every error you commit becomes unutterably wicked, and of you I may say, "Who can understand his errors?"

But I might exhaust the congregation by bringing up one by one. Here comes the father. Sir, your sins will be imitated by your children. You cannot, therefore, understand your errors, because they are sins against your own offspring—sins against the children that have sprung from your own loins. Here is the magistrate. Sir, your sins are of a peculiar dye, because, standing in your position, your character is watched and looked up to, and whatever you do becomes the excuse of other men. I bring up another man who holds no office in the state whatever, and who, perhaps, is little known among men. But, sir, you have received special grace from God, you have had rich enjoyment of the light of your Saviour's countenance; you have been poor, but he has made you rich—rich in faith. Now, when you rebel against him, the sins of God's favorites are sins indeed. Iniquities committed by the people of God become as huge as high Olympus, and reach the very stars. Who among us, then, can understand his errors; their special aggravations, their number, and their guilt? Lord search thou us and know our ways!

II. Now I come to THE IMPRESSING OF IT ON THE HEART, as God the Holy Spirit shall help me.

Before a man could understand his errors there are several mysteries which he must know. But each one of these mysteries, methinks, is beyond his knowledge, and consequently the understanding of the whole depth of the guilt of his sin must be quite beyond human power. Now, the first mystery that man must understand is *the fall*. Until I know how much all my powers are debased and depraved, how thoroughly my will is perverted and my judgment turned from its right channel, how

really and essentially vicious my nature has become, it cannot be possible for me to know the whole extent of my guilt. Here is a piece of iron laid upon the anvil. The hammers are plied upon it lustily. A thousand sparks are scattered on every side. Suppose it possible to count each spark as it falls from the anvil; yet who could guess the number of the unborn sparks that still lie latent and hidden in the mass of iron? Now, brethren, your sinful nature may be compared to that heated bar o iron. Temptations are the hammers; your sins the sparks. If you could count them (which you cannot do) yet who could tell the multitude of unborn iniquities—germs of sin that lie slumbering in your souls? Yet must you know this before you know the whole sinfulness of your nature. Our open sins are like the farmer's little sample which he brings to market. There are granaries full at home. The iniquities that we see are like the weeds upon the surface soil; but I have been told, and, indeed, have seen the truth of it, that if you dig six feet into the earth, and turn up fresh soil, there will be found in that soil seeds indigenous to the land. And so we are not to think merely of the sins that grow on the surface, but if we could turn our heart up to its core and centre, we should find it as fully permeated with sin as every piece of putridity is with worms and rottenness.

The fact is, that man is a reeking mass of corruption. His whole soul is by nature so debased and so depraved, that no description which can be given of him even by inspired tongues can fully tell how base and vile a thing he is. An ancient writer said once of the iniquity within, that it was like the stores of water which it is believed are hidden in the depths of the earth. God once broke up the fountains of the great deep, and then they covered the mountains twenty cubits upward. If God should ever withdraw his restraining grace and break up in our hearts the whole fountains of the great depths of our iniquity, it would be a flood so wondrous, that it would cover the highest tops of our hopes, and the whole world within us would be drowned in dread despair. Not a living thing could be found in this sea of evil. It would cover all, and swallow up the whole of our manhood. Ah! says an old proverb, "If man

could wear his sins on his forehead, he would pull his hat over his eyes." That old Roman who said he would like to have a window into his heart that every man could see within it, did not know himself, for if he had had such a window he would soon have begged to have a pair of shutters, and he would have kept them closed, I am sure; for could he ever have seen his own heart, he would have been driven raving mad. God, therefore, spares all eyes but his own that desperate sight—a naked human heart. Great God, here would we pause and cry, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. Thou desirest truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean; wash me and I shall be whiter than snow."

A second thing which it will be needful for us to understand before we can comprehend our errors is *God's law*. If I just describe the law for a moment, you will very readily see that you can never hope by any means fully to understand it. The law of God, as we read it in the ten great commandments, seems very simple, very easy. When we come, however, to put even its naked precepts into practice, we find that it is quite impossible for us fully to keep them. Our amazement, however, increases, when we find that the law does not mean merely what it says, but that it has a spiritual meaning, a hidden depth of purpose which at first sight we do not discover. For instance, the commandment, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," means more than the mere act—refers to fornication and uncleanness of any shape, both in act, and word, and thought. Nay, to use our Saviour's own exposition of it, "He that looketh upon a woman to lust after her, committeth adultery already with her in his heart." So with every commandment. The bare letter is nothing, compared with the whole stupendous meaning and severe strictness of the rule.

The commandments, if I may so speak, are like the stars. When seen with the naked eye, they appear to be brilliant points; if we could draw near to them, we should see them to be infinite worlds, greater than even our sun, stupendous though it is. So is it with the law of God. It seems to be but a little

inous point, because we see it at a distance, but when we come nearer where Christ stood, and estimate the law as he saw it, then we find it is vast, immeasurable. "The commandment is exceeding broad." Think then for a moment of the spirituality of the law, its extent and strictness. The law of Moses condemns for offence, without hope of pardon, and sin, like a mill stone, is bound around the sinner's neck, and he is cast into the depths. Nay, the law deals with sins of thought,—the imagination of evil is sin. The transit of sin across the heart leaves the stain of impurity behind it. This law, too, extends to every act,—tracks us to our bed-chamber, goes with us to our house of prayer, and if it discovers so much as the least sign of wavering from the strict path of integrity, it condemns us. When we think of the law of God we may well be overwhelmed with horror, and sit down and say, "God be merciful to me, for to keep this law is utterly beyond power; even to know the fulness of its meaning is not within finite capacity. Therefore great God cleanse us from our secret faults—save us by thy grace, for by the law we never can be saved."

Nor yet, even if you should know these two things, should you be able to answer this question; for, to comprehend our own errors, we must be able to understand *the perfection of God*. To get a full idea of how black sin is, you must know how bright God is. We see things by contrast. You will at one time have pointed out to you a color which appears perfectly white; yet it is possible for something to be whiter still; and when you think you have arrived at the very perfection of whiteness, you discover that there is still a shade, and that something may be found that is blanched to a higher state of purity. When we put ourselves in comparison with the apostles, we discover that we are not what we should be; but if we could bring ourselves side by side with the purity of God, O what spots! what defilements should we find on our surface! while the Immaculate God stands before us as the bright background to set out the blackness of our iniquitous souls. Ere thou canst know thine own defilement those eyes must look into the unutterable glory of the divine character. Him before whom the heavens are not pure—who chargeth the angels with

folly—thou must know him before thou canst know thyself. Hope not, then, that thou shalt ever attain to a perfect knowledge of the depths of thine own sin.

Again: he that would understand his errors in all their heinousness must know the mystery of *hell*. We must walk that burning marl, stand in the midst of the blazing flame; nay, feel it. We must feel the venom of destruction as it makes the blood boil in each vein. We must find our nerves converted into fiery roads, along which the hot feet of pain shall travel, hurrying with lightning pace. We must know the extent of eternity, and then the unutterable agony of that wrath which abides on the souls of the lost, before we can know the awful character of sin. You may best measure the sin by the punishment. Depend upon it, God will not put his creatures to a single pang more than justice absolutely demands. There is no such thing as sovereign torture or sovereign hell. God does not stretch his creature on the rack like a tyrant; he will give him but what he deserves, and, perhaps, even when God's wrath is fiercest against sin, he does not punish the sinner so much as his sin might warrant, but only as much as it demands. At any rate, there will not be a grain more of wormwood in the cup of the lost than naked justice absolutely requires. Then, O my God! if thy creatures are to be cast into a lake that burneth with fire and brimstone—if into a pit that is bottomless lost souls must be driven, then what a hideous thing sin must be. I cannot understand that torture, therefore I cannot understand the guilt that deserves it. Yet am I conscious that my guilt deserved it, or else God would not have threatened me with it, for he is just and I am unjust; he is holy and righteous, and good, and he would not punish me more for my sin than my sin absolutely required.

Yet once more—a last endeavor to impress this question of my text upon our hearts. George Herbert saith very sweetly —"He that would know sin let him repair to Olivet, and he shall see a man so wrung with pain that all his head, his hair his garments bloody be. Sin was that press which forced pair to hunt its cruel food through every vein." You must see Christ sweating as it were great drops of blood; you must have

a vision of him with his back torn by the accursed whip; you must see him going on his dolorous journey through Jerusalem; you must behold him fainting under the weight of the cross; you must see him as the nails are driven through his hands and through his feet; your tearful eyes must watch the agonies of death; you must drink of the bitterness of wormwood mingled with the gall; you must stand in the thick darkness with your own soul exceeding sorrowful even unto death; you must cry yourself that awful earth-startling cry of "Lama sabachthani;" you too must, as he did, feel all that weight of God's almighty wrath; you must be ground between the upper and nether millstones of justice and vengeance; you must drink of the cup to its last dregs, and like Jesus cry—"It is finished;" or else you can never know all your errors, and understand the guilt of your sin. But this is clearly impossible. Who wishes to suffer, as the Saviour suffered, all the horrors which he endured? He, blessed be his name, has suffered for us. The cup is emptied now. The cross stands up no longer for us to die thereon. Quenched is the flame of wrath for every true believer. Now no more is God angry with his people, for *he* has put away sin through the sacrifice of himself. Yet I say it again, before we could know sin we must know the whole of that awful wrath of God which Jesus Christ endured. Who then, can understand his errors?

III. I hope to have your patient attention but a few moments longer while I make THE PRACTICAL APPLICATION, by touching upon the lessons which are drawn from such a subject as this.

The first lesson is—Behold then the folly of all hope of salvation by our own righteousness. Come hither, ye that trust in yourselves. Look to Sinai, tremble and despair. You say that you have good works. Alas, your *good* works are evil, but have you no *evil* ones? Do you deny that you have ever sinned? Ah! my hearer, art thou so besotted as to declare that thy thoughts have all been chaste, thy desires all heavenly, and thine actions all pure? Oh, man, if all this were true, if thou hadst no sins of commission, yet, what about thy sins of omission? Hast thou done all that God and thy brother could

require of thee? Oh these sins of omission! The hungry that you have not fed, the naked that you have not clothed, the sick ones, and those that are in prison, that you have not visited—remember, it is for sins like these that the goats are found at the left hand at last. Not for what they did do, but for what they did not do—the things they left undone—these men were cast into the lake of fire. Oh, my hearer, have done with thy boasting; pull out those plumes from thine helmet, thou rebellious one, and come with thy glory draggling in the mire, and with thy bright garment stained, and now confess that thou hast no righteousness of thine own—that thou art all unclean and full of sin.

If but this one practical lesson were learned, it were sufficient to repay this morning's gathering, and a blessing would be conveyed to every spirit that had learned it. But now we come to another—*how vain are all hopes of salvation by our feelings.* We have a new legalism to fight with in our Christian Churches. There are men and women who think they must not believe on Christ till their sins rise to a most agonizing point. They think they must feel a certain degree of sorrow, a deep sense of need, before they may come to Christ at all. Ah! soul, if thou art never saved till thou knowest all thy guilt, thou wilt never be saved, for thou canst never know it. I have shown thee the utter impossibility of thy ever being able to discover the heights and depths of thine own lost state. Man, don't try to be saved by thy feelings. Come and take Christ just as he is, and come to him just as thou art. "But, Sir, *may I* come? I am not invited to come." Yes you are, "Whosoever will, let him come." Don't believe that the invitations of the gospel are given only to characters; they are, some of them, unlimited invitations. It is the duty of every man to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. It is every man's solemn duty to trust Christ, not because of anything that man is, or is not, but because he is commanded to do it. "This is the command of God, that ye believe on Jesus Christ whom he has sent."

Trust now in his precious blood, you are saved, and you shall see his face in heaven. Despair of being saved by feeling, since perfect feelings are impossible, and a perfect knowledge of our

own guilt is quite beyond our reach. Come, then, to Christ, hard-hearted as thou art, and take him to be the Saviour of thy hard heart. Come, poor stony conscience, poor icy soul, come as thou art; he will warm thee, he will melt thee.

"True belief, and true repentance,
Every grace that brings us nigh;
Without money,
Come to Jesus Christ and buy."

Another sweet inference—and surely this might well be the last—is this: what grace is this which pardons sin?—sin so great that the most enlarged capacity cannot comprehend its heinousness. Oh! I know my sins reach from the east even to the west—that aiming at the eternal skies, they rise like pointed mountains towards heaven. But then, blessed be the name of God, the blood of Christ is wider than my sin. That shoreless flood of Jesus' merit is deeper than the heights of mine iniquities. My sin may be great, but his merit is greater still. I cannot conceive my own guilt, much less express it; but the blood of Jesus Christ, God's dear Son, cleanseth us from all sin—infinite guilt, but Infinite pardon—boundless iniquities, but boundless merits to cover all. What if thy sins were greater than heaven's breadth, yet Christ is greater than heaven. The heaven of heavens cannot contain him. If thy sins were deeper than the bottomless hell, yet Christ's atonement is deeper still, for he descended deeper than ever man himself as yet hath dived—even damned men, in all the horror of their agony—for Christ went to the end of punishment, and deeper thy sins can never plunge. Oh! boundless love, that covers all my faults. My poor hearer, believe on Christ now. God help thee to believe. May the Spirit now enable thee to trust in Jesus. Thou canst not save thyself. All hopes of self-salvation are delusive. Now give up—have done with self, and take Christ. Just as thou art, drop into his arms. He will take thee—he will save thee. He died to do it, and he lives to accomplish it. He will not lose the spirit that casts itself into his hands, and makes him his all in all.

I think I must not detain you longer. The subject is one

which might command a far larger mind than mine, and better words than I can gather now. Let me echo again and again the one sentiment I wish for all to receive, which is just this. We are so vile that our vileness is beyond our own comprehension, but nevertheless, the blood of Christ hath infinite efficacy, and he that believeth in the Lord Jesus is saved, be his sins ever so many, but he that believeth not must be lost, be his sins never so few.

God bless you all, for Christ's sake. AMEN.

SERMON XVI.

NONE BUT JESUS.

[On Sunday morning, Feb. 17, 1861, Mr. Spurgeon delivered the following discourse in Exeter Hall, and in the evening preached the following sermon, from the same text, at New Park Street Chapel. This one, the author states, "has been translated for the aborigines of New Zealand, and some thousands have been distributed. The reading of it in Auckland, New Zealand, has led to several conversions among Europeans and natives." A testimony most gratifying, and for which all true Christians should thank God.]

"He that believeth on him is not condemned."—John, iii. 18.

The way of salvation is stated in Scripture in the very plainest terms, and yet, perhaps, there is no truth about which more errors have been uttered, than concerning the faith which saves the soul. Well has it been proved by experience, that all doctrines of Christ are mysteries—mysteries, not so much in themselves, but because they are hid to them that are lost, in whom the God of this world hath blinded their eyes. So plain is Scripture, that one would have said, "He that runs may read;" but so dim is man's eye, and so marred is his understanding, that the very simplest truth of Scripture he distorts and misrepresents. And indeed, my brethren, even those who know what faith is, personally and experimentally, do not always find it easy to give a good definition of it. They think they have hit the mark, and then afterwards they lament that they have failed. Exerting themselves to describe some one part of faith, they

find they have forgotten another, and in their earnestness to deliver the poor sinner out of one mistake, they often lead him into another. So that I think I may say that, while faith is the simplest thing in all the world, yet it is one of the most difficult upon which to preach, because, from its very importance, our soul begins to tremble while speaking of it, and then we are not able to describe it so clearly as we would.

I intend this morning, by God's help, to put together sundry thoughts upon faith, each of which I may have uttered in your hearing at different times, but which have not been collected into one sermon before, and which, I have no doubt, have been misunderstood from the want of their having been put together in their proper consecutive order. I shall speak a little on each of these points: first, *the object of faith*, to what it looks; next, *the reason of faith*, whence it comes; thirdly, *the ground of faith*, or what it wears when it comes; fourthly, *the warrant of faith*, or why it dares to come to Christ; and fifthly, *the result of faith*, or how it speeds when it doth come to Christ.

I. First, THE OBJECT OF FAITH, or to what faith looks.

I am told in the Word of God to believe—What am I to believe? I am bidden to look—to what am I to look? What is to be the object of my hope, belief, and confidence? The reply is simple. The object of faith, to a sinner, is Christ Jesus. How many make a mistake about this, and think they are to believe on *God the Father!* Now, belief in God is a result of faith in Jesus. We come to believe in the eternal love of the Father as the result of trusting the precious blood of the Son. Many men say, "I would believe in Christ if I knew that I were elect." This is coming to the Father, and no man can come to the Father except by Christ. It is the Father's work to elect; you cannot come directly to him, therefore you cannot know your election until first you have believed on Christ the Redeemer, and then through redemption you can approach the Father and know your election. Some, too, make the mistake of looking to the work of God *the Holy Spirit*. They look within to see if they have certain feelings, and if they find them their faith is strong, but if their feelings have departed from them, then their

faith is weak, so that they look to the work of the Spirit which is not the object of a sinner's faith. Both the Father and the Spirit must be trusted in order to complete redemption, but for the particular mercy of justification and pardon, the blood of the Mediator is the only plea. *Christians* have to trust the Spirit after conversion, but the sinner's business, if he would be saved, is not with trusting the Spirit, nor with looking to the Spirit, but looking to Christ Jesus, and to him alone. I know your salvation depends on the whole Trinity, but yet the first and immediate object of a sinner's justifying faith is neither God the Father nor God the Holy Ghost, but God the Son, incarnate in human flesh, and offering atonement for sinners.

Hast thou the eye of faith? Then, sorl, look thou to *Christ as God.* If thou wouldst be saved, believe him to be God over all, blessed forever. Bow before him, and accept him as being "Very God of very God," for if thou do not, thou hast no part in him. When thou hast this believed, believe in him as *man.* Believe the wondrous story of his incarnation; rely upon the testimony of the evangelists, who declare that the Infinite was robed in the infant, that the Eternal was concealed within the mortal; that he who was King of heaven became a servant of servants and the Son of man. Believe and admire the mystery of his incarnation, for unless thou believest this, thou canst not be saved thereby. Then, specially, if thou wouldst be saved, let thy faith behold Christ in his *perfect righteousness.* See him keeping the law without blemish; obeying his Father without error; preserving his integrity without flaw. All this thou art to consider as being done on thy behalf. Thou couldst not keep the law, he kept it for thee. Thou couldst not obey God perfectly —lo! his obedience standeth in the stead of thy obedience—by it thou art saved. But take care that thy faith mainly fixes itself upon Christ *as dying and as dead.* View the Lamb of God as dumb before his shearers; view him as the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; go thou with him to Gethsemane, and behold him sweating drops of blood. Mark, thy faith has nothing to do with anything within thyself; the object of thy faith is nothing within thee, but a something without thee. Believe on him then, who on yonder tree with nailed hands

and feet, pours out his life for sinners. There is the object of thy faith for justification; not in thyself, nor in anything which the Holy Spirit has done in thee, or anything he has promised to do for thee; but thou art to look to Christ and to Christ Jesus alone. Then let thy faith behold Chrst as *rising from the dead*. See him—he has borne the curse, and now he receives the justification. He dies to pay the debt; he rises that he may nail the hand writing of that discharged debt to the cross. See him ascending up on high, and behold him this day pleading before the Father's throne. He is there pleading for his people, offering up to-day his authoritative petition for all that come to God by him. And he, as God, as man, as living, as dying, as rising, and as reigning above—he, and he alone, is to be the object of thy faith for the pardon of sin.

On nothing else must thou trust; he is to be the only prop and pillar of thy confidence; and all thou addest thereunto will be a wicked antichrist, a rebellion against the sovereignty of the Lord Jesus. But take care if your faith save you, that while you look to Christ in all these matters, you view him as being *a substitute*. This doctrine of substitution is so essential to the whole plan of salvation, that I must explain it here for the thousandth time. God is just, he must punish sin; God is merciful, he wills to pardon those who believe in Jesus. How is this to be done? How can he be just and exact the penalty—merciful, and accept the sinner? He doeth it thus: he taketh the sins of his people and actually lifteth them up from off his people to Christ, so that they stand as innocent as though they had never sinned, and Christ is looked upon by God as though he had been all the sinners in the world rolled into one. The sin of his people was taken from their persons, and really and actually, not typically and metaphorically, but really and actually laid on Christ. Then God came forth with his fiery sword to meet the sinner and to punish him. He met Christ. Christ was not a sinner himself; but the sins of his people were all imputed to him. Justice, therefore, met Christ as though he had been the sinner—punished Christ for his people's sins—punished him as far as its rights could go—exacted from him the last atom of the penalty, and left not a dreg in the cup. And now, he who can

see Christ as being his substitute, and puts his trust in him, is thereby delivered from the curse of the law. Soul, when thou seest Christ obeying the law, thy faith is to say, "He obeys that for his people." When thou seest him dying, thou art to count the purple drops and say, "Thus he took my sins away." When thou seest him rising from the dead, thou art to say, "He rises as the head and representative of all his elect." And when thou seest him sitting at the right hand of God, thou art to view him there as the pledge that all for whom he died shall most surely sit at the Father's right hand. Learn to look on Christ as being in God's sight as though he were the sinner. "In him was no sin." He was "*the just*," but he suffered for the unjust. He was the righteous, but he stood in the place of the unrighteous; and all that the unrighteous ought to have endured, Christ has endured once for all, and put away their sins forever by the sacrifice of himself. Now, this is the great object of faith. I pray you, do not make any mistake about this, for a mistake here will be dangerous, if not fatal. View Christ, by your faith, as being in his life, and death, and sufferings, and resurrection, the substitute for all whom his Father gave him—the vicarious sacrifice for the sins of all those who will trust him with their souls. Christ, then, thus set forth, is the object of justifying faith.

Now let me further remark, that there are some of you, no doubt, saying—"Oh, I should believe and I should be saved, if" —if what? If Christ had died? "Oh no, sir, my doubt is nothing about Christ." I thought so. Then what is the doubt? "Why, I should believe *if I felt this, or if I had done that.*" Just so; but I tell you, you could not believe in Jesus if you felt that, or if you had done that, for then you would believe in yourself, and not in Christ. If you were so-and-so, then you could have confidence. Confidence in what? Why, confidence in your feelings, and confidence in your doings, and that is just the clear contrary of confidence in Christ. Faith is not to infer from something good within me that I shall be saved, but to say in despite of the fact that I am guilty in the sight of God and deserve his wrath, yet I do nevertheless believe that the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth me from all sin; and though my present consciousness condemns me, yet my faith overpow

ers my consciousness, and I do believe that "he is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him." To come to Christ as a saint is very easy work; to trust to a doctor to cure you when you believe you are getting better, is very easy; but to trust your physician when you feel as if the sentence of death were in your body, to bear up when the disease is rising into the very skin, and when the ulcer is gathering its venom—to believe even then in the efficacy of the medicine—that is faith. And so, when sin gets the mastery of thee, when thou feelest that the law condemns thee, then, even then, as a sinner, to trust Christ, this is the most daring feat in all the world; and the faith which shook down the walls of Jericho, the faith which raised the dead, the faith which stopped the mouths of lions, was not greater than that of a poor sinner, when in the teeth of all his sins he dares to trust the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ. Do this, soul, then thou art saved, whosoever thou mayest be. The object of faith, then, is Christ as the substitute for sinners. God in Christ, but not God apart from Christ, nor any work of the Spirit, but the work of Jesus only must be viewed by you as the foundation of your hope.

II. Secondly, THE REASON OF FAITH, or why doth any man believe, and whence doth his faith come?

"Faith cometh by *hearing*." Granted; but do not all men hear, and do not many still remain unbelieving? How, then, doth any man come by his faith? To his own experience his faith comes as the result of *a sense of need*. He feels himself needing a Saviour; he finds Christ to be just such a Saviour as he wants, and therefore because he cannot help himself, he believes in Jesus. Having nothing of his own, he feels he must take Christ or else perish, and therefore he doth it because he cannot help doing it. He is fairly driven up in a corner, and there is but this one way of escape, namely, by the righteousness of another; for he feels he cannot escape by any good deeds, or sufferings of his own, and he cometh to Christ and humbleth himself, because he cannot do without Christ, and must perish unless he lay hold of him. But to carry the question further back, where does that man get his sense of need? How is it that *he*, rather

than others, feels his need of Christ? It is certain he has no more necessity for Christ than other men. How doth he come to know, then, that he is lost and ruined? How is it that he is driven by the sense of ruin to take hold on Christ the restorer? The reply is, this is *the gift of God;* this is the work of the Spirit. No man comes to Christ except the Spirit draw him, and the Spirit draws men to Christ by shutting them up under the law to a conviction that if they do not come to Christ, they must perish. Then by sheer stress of weather, they tack about and run into this heavenly port. Salvation by Christ is so disagreeable to our carnal mind, so inconsistent with our love of human merit, that we never would take Christ to be our all in all, if the Spirit did not convince us that we were wanting at all, and did not so compel us to lay hold on Christ.

But, then, the question goes further back still; how is it that the Spirit of God teaches some men their need, and not other men? Why is it that some of you were driven by your sense of need to Christ, while others go on in their self-righteousness and perish? There is no answer to be given but this, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." It comes to divine sovereignty at the last. The Lord hath "hidden those things from the wise and prudent, and hath revealed them unto babes." According to the way in which Christ put it—"My sheep, hear my voice;" "ye believe not because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you." Some divines would like to read that—"Ye are not my sheep, because ye do not believe." As if believing made us the sheep of Christ; but the text puts it—"Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep." "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me." If they come not, it is a clear proof that they were never given; for those who were given of old eternity to Christ, chosen of God the Father, and then redeemed by God the Son—these are led by the Spirit, through a sense of need to come and lay hold on Christ. No man yet ever did, or ever will believe in Christ, unless he feels his need of him. No man ever did or will feel his need of Christ, unless the Spirit makes him feel, and the Spirit will make no man feel his need of Jesus savingly, unless it be so written in the eternal book, in which God hath surely

engraved the names of his chosen. So, then, I think I am not to be misunderstood on this point, that the reason of faith, or why men believe, is God's electing love working through the Spirit by a sense of need, and so bringing them to Christ Jesus.

III. Thirdly, THE GROUND OF THE SINNER'S FAITH, or on what ground he dares to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

My dear friends, I have already said that no man will believe in Jesus, unless he feels his need of him. But you have often heard me say, and I repeat it again, that I do not come to Christ pleading that I feel my need of him; my reason for believing in Christ, is not that I *feel* my need of him, but that I *have* a need of him. The ground on which a man comes to Jesus, is not as a *sensible* sinner, but as a *sinner*, and nothing but a sinner. He will not come unless he is awakened; but when he comes, he does not say, "Lord, I come to thee because I am an awakened sinner, save me." But he says, "Lord, I am a *sinner;* save me." Not his awakening, but his sinfulness is the method and plan upon which he dares to come. You will, perhaps, perceive what I mean, for I cannot exactly explain myself just now. If I refer to the preaching of a great many Calvinistic divines, they say to a sinner, "Now, *if you feel* your need of Christ, *if* you have repented so much, *if* you have been harrowed by the law to such-and-such a degree, then you may come to Christ on the ground that you are an awakened sinner." I say that is false. No man may come to Christ on the ground of his being an awakened sinner; he must come to him *as a sinner*. When I come to Jesus, I know I am not come unless I am awakened, but still, I do not come *as* awakened. I do not stand at the foot of his cross to be washed because I have repented; I bring nothing when I come but sin. A sense of need is a good feeling; but when I stand at the foot of the cross, I do not believe in Christ because I have got good feelings, but I believe in him whether have good feelings or not.

"Just as I am without one plea,
But that thy blood was shed for me,
And that thou bidst me come to thee,
O Lamb of God, I come."

Roger, Sheppard, Flavell, and several excellent divines, in the Puritanic age, and especially Richard Baxter, used to give descriptions of what a man must feel before he may dare to come to Christ. Now, I say in the language of the good Fenner, another of those divines, who declared he was but a babe in grace when compared with them—"I dare to say it, that all this is not Scriptural Sinners do feel these things before they come, but they do not come on the ground of having felt it; they come on the ground of being sinners, and on no other ground whatever." The gate of Mercy is opened, and over the door is written, "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save *sinners*." Between that word "save" and the word "sinners," there is no adjective. It does not say, "penitent sinners," "awakened sinners," "sensible sinners," "grieving sinners," or "alarmed sinners." No, it only says, "sinners;" and I know this, that when I come, I come to Christ to-day, for I feel it is as much a necessity of my life to come to the cross of Christ to-day as it was to come ten years ago—when I come to him I dare not come as a conscious sinner or an awakened sinner, but I have to come still as a sinner with nothing in my hands. I saw an aged man this week in the vestry of a chapel in Yorkshire. I had been saying something to this effect: the old man had been a Christian for years, and he said, "I never saw it put exactly so, but still I know that is just the way I come; I say, 'Lord,

'Nothing in my hands I bring,
Simply to thy cross I cling;
Naked, look to thee for dress;
Helpless, come to thee for grace;
Black'—

("Black enough," said the old man.)

'I to the fountain fly,
Wash me, Saviour, or I die.'"

Faith, is getting right out of yourself and getting into Christ. I know that many hundreds of poor souls have been troubled because the minister has said, "If you feel your need, you may

come to Christ." "But," say they, "I do not feel my need enough; I am sure I do not." Many a score letters have I received from poor troubled consciences, who have said, "I would venture to believe in Christ to save me if I had a tender conscience; if I had a soft heart—but oh, my heart is like a rock of ice which will not melt. I cannot feel as I would like to feel, and therefore I must not believe in Jesus." Oh! down with it, down with it! It is a wicked anti-Christ; it is flat Popery! it is not your soft heart that entitles you to believe. You are to believe in Christ to renew your hard heart, and come to him with nothing about you but sin. The ground on which a sinner comes to Christ is that he is dead, and not that he knows he is dead; that he is lost, and not that he knows he is lost. I know he will not come unless he does know it, but that is not the ground on which he comes. It is the secret reason why, but it is not the public positive ground which he understands. Here was I, year after year, afraid to come to Christ, because I thought I did not feel enough; and I used to read that hymn of Cowper's about being insensible as steel—

> "If aught is felt 'tis only pain
> To find I cannot feel."

When I believed in Christ, I thought I did not feel at all. *Now* when I look back, I find that I had been feeling all the while most acutely and intensely, and most of all because I thought I did not feel. Generally the people who repent the most, think they are impenitent, and people feel most their need when they think they do not feel at all, for we are no judges of our feelings, and hence, the gospel invitation is not put upon the ground of anything of which we can be a judge; it is put on the ground of our being sinners, and nothing but sinners. "Well," replies one, "But it says, 'Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy-laden and I will give you rest'—then we must be weary and heavy-laden." Just so; so it is in that text, but then there is another. "Whosoever will, let him come;" and that does not say anything about "weary and heavy-laden." Besides, while the invitation is given to the weary and heavy-laden, you will perceive that the promise is not made to them *as* weary and

heavy-laden, but it is made to them *as* coming to Christ. They did not know that they were weary and heavy-laden when they came; they thought they were not. They really were, but part of their weariness was that they could not be as weary as they would like to be, and part of their load was that they did not feel their load enough. They came to Christ just as they were, and he saved them, not because there was any merit in their weariness, or any efficacy in their being heavy-laden, but he saved them as sinners and nothing but sinners, and so they were washed in his blood and made clean. My dear hearer, let me put this truth home to thee. If thou wilt come to Christ this morning, as nothing but a sinner, he will not cast thee out.

Old Tobias Crisp says, in one of his sermons upon this very point, "I dare to say it, but if thou dost come to Christ, whosoever thou mayest be, if he does not receive thee, then he is not true to his word, for he says, 'Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.'" If thou comest, never mind qualification or preparation. He needeth no qualification of duties or of feelings either. Thou art to come just as thou art, and if thou art the biggest sinner out of hell, thou art as fit to come to Christ as if thou wert the most moral and most excellent of men. There is a bath: who is fit to be washed? A man's blackness is no reason why he should not be washed, but the clearer reason why he should be. When our city magistrates were giving relief to the poor, nobody said, "I am so poor, therefore I am not fit to have relief." Your poverty is your preparation, the black is the white here. Strange contradiction! The only thing you can bring to Christ is your sin and your wickedness. All he asks is, that you will come empty. If you have anything of your own, you must leave all before you come. If there be anything good in you, you cannot trust Christ, you must come with nothing in your hand. Take him as all in all, and that is the only ground upon which a poor soul can be saved—as a sinner, and nothing but a sinner.

IV. Fourthly, THE WARRANT OF FAITH, or why a man dares to trust in Christ.

Is it not imprudent for any man to trust Christ to save him,

and especially when he has no good thing whatever? Is it not an arrogant presumption for any man to trust Christ? No, sirs, it is not. It is a grand and noble work of God the Holy Spirit for a man to give the lie to all his sins, and still to believe and set to his seal that God is true, and believe in the virtue of the blood of Jesus. But why does any man dare to believe in Christ, I will ask you now. "Well," saith one man, "I summoned faith to believe in Christ because I did feel there was a work of the Spirit in me." You do not believe in Christ at all. "Well," says another, "I thought that I had a right to believe in Christ, because I felt somewhat." You had not any right to believe in Christ at all on such a warrant as that. What is a man's warrant then, for believing in Christ? Here it is. Christ tells him to do it, that is his warrant. Christ's word is the warrant of the sinner for believing—not what he feels nor what he is, nor what he is not, but that Christ has told him to do it. The Gospel runs thus: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. He that believeth not shall be damned." Faith in Christ, then, is a commanded duty as well as a blessed privilege, and what a mercy it is that it is a duty; because there never can be any question but that a man has a right to do his duty. Now, on the ground that God commands me to believe, I have a right to believe, be I who I may. The gospel is sent to every creature. Well, I belong to that tribe; I am one of the "every" creatures, and that gospel commands me to believe. I cannot be wrong in obeying a command of God. Now, it is a command of God given to every creature, that he should believe on Jesus Christ whom God hath sent. This is your warrant, sinner, and a blessed warrant it is, for it is one which hell cannot gainsay, and which heaven cannot withdraw. You need not be looking within to find the misty warrants of your experience. You need not be looking to your works, and to your feelings, to get some dull and insufficient warrants for your confidence in Christ. You may believe Christ because he tells you to do so. That is a sure ground to stand on, and one which admits of no doubt.

I will suppose that we are all starving; that the city has been besieged and shut up, and there has been a long, long famine,

and we are ready to die of hunger. There comes out an invitation to us to repair at once to the palace of some great one, to eat and drink; but we have grown foolish, and will not accept the invitation. Suppose now that some hideous madness has got hold of us, and we prefer to die, and had rather starve than come. Suppose the king's herald should say, "Come and feast, poor hungry souls, and because I know you are unwilling to come, I add this threat, if you come not my warriors shall be upon you; they shall make you feel the sharpness of their swords." I think, my dear friends, we should say, "We bless the great man for that threatening, because now we need not say, 'I may not come,' while the fact is we may not stay away. I need not say I am not fit to come, for I am commanded to come, and I am threatened if I do not come." That awful sentence—"He that believeth not shall be damned," was added not out of anger, but because the Lord knew our silly madness, and that we should refuse our own mercies unless he thundered at us to make us come to the feast. "Compel them to come in;" this was the Word of the Master of old, and that text is part of the carrying out of that exhortation. "Compel them to come in." Sinner, you cannot be lost by trusting Christ, but you will be lost if you do not trust him, ay, and lost for not trusting him. I put it boldly now—sinner, not only may you come, but oh! I pray you, do not defy the wrath of God by refusing to come. The gate of mercy stands wide open; why will you not come? Why will you not? Why so proud? Why will you still refuse his voice and perish in your sins? Mark, if you perish, any one of you, your blood lies not at God's door, nor Christ's door, but at your own. He can say of you, "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." Oh! poor trembler, if thou be willing to come, there is nothing in God's Word to keep thee from coming, but there are both threatenings to drive thee and powers to draw thee. Still I hear you say, "I must not trust Christ." You *may*, I say, for every creature under heaven is commanded to do it, and what you are commanded to do, you may do. "Ah! well," saith one, "still I do not feel that I may." There you are again; you say you will not do what God tells you, because of some stupid feelings of your own. You are not

told to trust Christ because you feel anything, but simply because you are a sinner. Now you know you are a sinner. "I am," says one, "and that is my sorrow." Why your sorrow? That is some sign that you do feel. "Ay," saith one, "but I do not feel enough, and that is why I sorrow. I do not feel as I should." Well, suppose you do feel, or suppose you do not, you are a sinner, and "this is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." "Oh, but I am such an old sinner; I have been sixty years in sin." Where is it written that after sixty you cannot be saved? Sir, Christ could save you at a hundred—ay, if you were a Methuselah in guilt. "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." "Whosoever will let him come." "He is able to save to the utmost them that come unto God by him."

"Yes," says one, "but I have been a drunkard, a swearer, or lascivious, or profane." Then you are a sinner, you have not gone further than the uttermost, and he is able to save you still. "Ay," saith another, "but you do not know how my guilt has been aggravated." That only proves you to be a sinner, and that you are commanded to trust Christ and be saved. "Ay," cries yet another, "but you do not know how often I have rejected Christ." Yes, but that only makes you the more a sinner. "You do not know how hard my heart is." Just so, but that only proves you to be a sinner, and still proves you to be one whom Christ came to save. "Oh, but sir, I have not any good thing. If I had, you know, I should have something to encourage me." The fact of your not having any good thing, just proves to me that you are the man I am sent to preach to. Christ came to save that which was lost, and all you have said only proves that you are lost, and therefore he came to save you. Do trust him—do trust him. "But if I am saved," saith one, "I shall be the biggest sinner that ever was saved." Then the greater music in heaven when you get there; the more glory to Christ, for the bigger the sinner the more honor to Christ when at last he shall be brought home. "Ay, but my sin has abounded." His grace shall much more abound. "But my sin has reached even to heaven." Yes, but his mercy reaches above the heavens.

"Oh! but my guilt is as broad as the world." Yes, but his righteousness is broader than a thousand worlds. "Ay, but my sin is scarlet." Yes, but his blood is more scarlet than your sins, and can wash the scarlet out by a richer scarlet. "Ay, but I deserve to be lost, and death and hell cry for my damnation." Yes, and so they may, but the blood of Jesus Christ can cry louder than either death or hell; and it cries to-day, "Father, let the sinner live." Oh! I wish I could get this thought out of my own mouth, and get it into your heads, that when God saves you, it is not because of anything in you, it is because of something in himself. God's love has no reason except in his own bowels; God's reason for pardoning a sinner is found in his own heart, and not in the sinner. And there is as much reason in you why you should be saved as why another should be saved, namely, no reason at all. There is no reason in you why he should have mercy on you, but there is no reason wanted, for the reason lies in God, and in God alone.

V. And now I come to the conclusion, THE RESULT OF FAITH, or how it speeds when it comes to Christ.

The text says, "He that believeth is not condemned." There is a man there who has just this moment believed; he is not condemned. But he has been fifty years in sin, and has plunged into all manner of vice; his sins, which are many, are all forgiven him. He stands in the sight of God now as innocent as though he had never sinned. Such is the power of Jesus' blood, that "he that believeth is not condemned." Does this relate to what is to happen at the day of Judgment? I pray you look at the text, and you will find it does not say, "He that believeth *shall* not be condemned," but he *is* not; he is not now. And if he is not now, then it follows that he never shall be; for having believed in Christ, that promise still stands, "He that believeth is not condemned." I believe to-day I am not condemned; in fifty years' time that promise will be just the same—"He that believeth is not condemned." So that the moment a man puts his trust in Christ, he is freed from all condemnation—past, present and to come; and from that day he stands in God's sight as though he were without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing

"But he sins," you say. He does indeed, but his sins are not laid to his charge. They are laid to the charge of Christ of old, and God can never charge the offence on two—first on Christ, and then on the sinner. "Ay, but he often falls into sin." That may be possible; though if the Spirit of God be in him he sinneth not as he was wont to do. He sins by reason of infirmity, not by reason of his love to sin, for now he hateth it.

But mark, you shall put it in your own way if you will, and I will answer, "Yes, but though he sin, yet is he no more guilty in the sight of God, for all his guilt has been taken from him, and put on Christ—positively, literally, and actually lifted off from him, and put upon Jesus Christ. Do you see the Jewish host? There is a scapegoat brought out; the high priest confesses the sin of the people over the scapegoat's head. The sin is all gone from the people, and laid upon the scapegoat. Away goes the scapegoat into the wilderness. Is there any sin left on the people? If there be, then the scapegoat has not carried it away. Because it cannot be *here* and *there* too. It cannot be carried away and left behind too. "No," say you, "Scripture says the scapegoat carried away the sin; there was none left on the people when the scapegoat had taken away the sin. And so, when by faith we put our hand upon the head of Christ, does Christ take away our sin, or does he not? If he does not, then it is of no use our believing in him: but if he doth really take away our sin, then our sin cannot be on him and on us too; if it be on Christ, we are free, clear, accepted, justified, and this is the true doctrine of justification by faith. As soon as a man believeth in Christ Jesus, his sins are gone from him, and gone away forever. They are blotted out now. What if a man owe a hundred pounds, yet if he has got a receipt for it, he is free; it is blotted out; there is an erasure made in the book, and the debt is gone. Though the man commit sin, yet the debt having been paid before even the debt was acquired, he is no more a debtor to the law of God. Doth not Scripture say, that God has cast his people's sins into the depths of the sea? Now, if they are in the depths of the sea, they cannot be on his people too. Blessed be his name, in the day when he casts our sins into the depth of the sea, he views us as pure in his sight, and

we stand accepted in the beloved. Then he says, "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." They cannot be removed and be here still.

Then if thou believest in Christ, thou art no more in the sight of God a sinner; thou art accepted as though thou wert perfect, as though thou hadst kept the law—for Christ has kept it, and his righteousness is thine. You have broken it, but your sin is his, and he has been punished for it. Mistake not yourselves any longer; you are no more what you were: when you believe, you stand in Christ's stead, even as Christ of old stood in your stead. The transformation is complete, the exchange is positive and eternal. They who believe in Jesus are as much accepted of God the Father as even his Eternal Son is accepted; and they that believe not, let them do what they will, they shall but go about to work out their own righteousness; but they abide under the law, and still shall they be under the curse. Now, ye that believe in Jesus, walk up and down the earth in the glory of this great truth. You are sinners in yourselves, but you are washed in the blood of Christ. David says, "Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow." You have lately seen the snow come down. What could be whiter? Why, the Christian is whiter than that. You say, "He is black." I know he is as black as any one, but the blood-drop falls on him, and he is white —"whiter than snow." The next time you see the snow-white crystals falling from heaven, look on them and say, "Ah, though I must confess within myself that I am unworthy and unclean, yet, believing in Christ, he hath given me his righteousness so completely, that I am even whiter than the snow as it descends from the treasury of God."

Oh! for faith to lay hold on this. Oh! for an overpowering faith that shall get the victory over doubts and fears, and make us enjoy the liberty wherewith Christ makes men free. Go home, ye that believe in Christ, and go to your beds this night, and say, "If I die in my bed, I cannot be condemned." Should you wake the next morning, go into the world and say, "I am not condemned." When the devil howls at you, tell him, "You may accuse, but I am not condemned." And if sometimes your sins rise, say, "I know you, but you are all gone forever—I am

not condemned." And when your turn shall come to die, shut your eyes in peace.

> "Bold shall you stand in that great day,
> For who aught to your charge can lay?"

Fully absolved, by grace you shall be found at last, and all sin's tremendous curse and blame shall be taken away, not because of anything you have done. I pray you do all you can for Christ out of gratitude, but even when you have done all, do not rest there. Rest still in the substitution and the sacrifice. Be you what Christ was in his Father's sight, and when conscience awakens, you can tell it that Christ was for you all that you ought to have been, that he has suffered all your penalty; and now neither mercy nor justice can smite you, since justice has clasped hands with mercy in a firm decree to save that man whose faith is in the cross of Christ. The Lord bless these words for his sake. AMEN.

SERMON XVII.

NONE BUT JESUS.

[Preached on Sunday Evening, Feb. 17, 1861, at New Park Street Chapel, from the same text as the preceding. Having in that considered Christ the object of Faith, he proceeds in this to discuss *justification* as the great gospel blessing resulting from the exercise of evangelical faith. In a word, Christ is the object which faith contemplates; Christ is the blessing which faith secures.]

"He that believeth on him is not condemned."—John, iii. 18.

In the morning sermon, our time was mainly taken up with the description of Faith—what it is. We had only a few minutes left at its close to describe what it leads to—the privilege of justification, which is a gift to the soul as the result of Faith. Let this high privilege, then, occupy our attention to-night. The text says, "He that believeth on him (that is on Christ Jesus)—is not condemned."

To take up the subject in order, we shall notice first, *the satisfactory declaration here made;* then, secondly, we shall endeavor to *correct certain misapprehensions respecting it, by reason of which, the Christian is often cast down;* and we shall close with *some reflections, positive and negative, as to what this text includes, and what it excludes.*

I. First of all, then, what a satisfactory declaration!—"He that believeth on him is not condemned."

You are aware that in our courts of law, a verdict of "*not guilty*," amounts to an acquittal, and the prisoner is immediately discharged. So is it in the language of the gospel; a sentence of "*not condemned*," implies the justification of the sinner. It means that the believer in Christ receives *now* a *present* justification. Faith does not produce its fruits by-and-bye, but *now*. So far as justification is the result of faith, it is given to the soul in the moment when it closes with Christ, and accepts him as its all in all. Are they who stand before the throne of God justified to-night?—so are we, as truly and as clearly justified as they who walk in white and sing his praises above. The thief upon the cross was justified the moment that he turned the eye of faith to Jesus, who was just then hanging by his side: and Paul, the aged, after years of service, was not more justified than was the thief with no service at all. We are *to-day* accepted in the Beloved, *to-day* absolved from sin, *to-day* innocent in the sight of God. Oh, ravishing, soul-transporting thought! There are some clusters of this vine which we shall not be able to gather till we go to heaven; but this is one of the first ripe clusters, and may be plucked and eaten here. This is not as the corn of the land, which we can never eat till we cross the Jordan; but it is part of the manna in the wilderness, and part too of our daily raiment, with which God supplies us in our journeying to and fro. We are *now*—even *now* pardoned; even *now* are our sins put away; even *now* we stand in the sight of God as though we had never been guilty; innocent as Adam when he stood in integrity, ere he had eaten of the fruit of the forbidden tree; pure as though we had never received the taint of depravity in our veins. "There is, therefore, *now* no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." There is not a sin in the Book of God, even *now*, against one of his people. There is nothing laid to their charge. There is neither speck, nor spot, nor wrinkle, nor any such thing remaining upon any one believer in the matter of justification in the sight of the Judge of all the earth.

But to pass on, the text evidently means not simply present, but *continual* justification. In the moment when you and I believed, it was said of us, "He is not condemned." Many days

have passed since then, many changes we have seen; but it is as true of us to-night, "He is not condemned." The Lord alone knows how long our appointed day shall be—how long ere we shall fulfil the hireling's time, and like a shadow flee away. But this we know, since every word of God is assured, and the gifts of God are without repentance, though we should live another fifty years, yet would it still be written here, "He that believeth on him is not condemned." Nay, if by some mysterious dealing in Providence our lives should be lengthened out to ten times the usual limit of man, and we should come to the eight or nine hundred years of Methuselah, still would it stand the same—"He that believeth on him is not condemned." "I give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." "The just shall live by faith." "He that believeth on him shall never be confounded." All these promises go to show that the justification which Christ gives to our faith is a continual one, which will last as long as we shall live. And remember, it will last in eternity as well as in time. We shall not in heaven wear any other dress but that which we wear here. To-day the righteous stand clothed in the righteousness of Christ. They shall wear this same wedding dress at the great wedding feast. But what if it should wear out? What that righteousness should lose its virtue in the eternity to come? Oh beloved! we entertain no fear about that. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but this righteousness shall never wax old. No moth shall fret it; no thief shall steal it; no weeping hand of lamentation shall rend it in twain. It is, it must be eternal, even as Christ himself, Jehovah our righteousness. Because he is our righteousness, the self existent, the everlasting, the immutable Jehovah, of whose years there is no end, and whose strength faileth not, therefore of our righteousness there is no end; and of its perfection, and of its beauty there shall never be any termination. The text, I think, very clearly teaches us, that he who believeth on Christ has received for ever a continual justification.

Again, think for a moment; the justification which is spoken of here is *complete*. "He that believeth on him is not condemned,"—that is to say, not in any measure or in any degree.

I know some think it is possible for us to be in such a state as to be half condemned and half accepted. So far as we are sinners so far condemned; and so far as we are righteous so far accepted. Oh, beloved, there is nothing like that in Scripture. It is altogether apart from the doctrine of the gospel. If it be of works, it is no more of grace; and if it be of grace, it is no more of works. Works and grace cannot mix and mingle any more than fire and water; it is either one or the other, it cannot be both; the two can never be allied. There can be no admixture of the two, no dilution of one with the other. He that believeth is free from all iniquity, from all guilt, from all blame; and though the devil bring an accusation, yet it is a false one, for we are free even from accusation, since it is boldly challenged, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" It does not say "Who shall prove it?" but "Who shall lay it to their charge?" They are so completely freed from condemnation, that not the shadow of a spot upon their soul is found; not even the slightest passing by of iniquity to cast its black shadow on them. They stand before God not only as half innocent, but as perfectly so; not only as half washed, but as whiter than snow. Their sins are not simply erased, they are blotted out; not simply put out of sight, but cast into the depths of the sea; not merely gone, and gone as far as the east is from the west, but gone forever. You know, beloved, that the Jew in his ceremonial purification, never had his conscience free from sin. After one sacrifice he needed still another, for these offerings could never make the comers thereunto perfect. The next day's sins needed a new lamb, and the next year's iniquity needed a new victim for an atonement. "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down at the right hand of God." No more burnt-offerings are needed, no more washing, no more blood, no more atonement, no more sacrifice. "It is finished!" hear the dying Saviour cry. Your sins have sustained their death-blow, the robe of your righteousness has received its last thread; it is done, complete, perfect. It needs no addition; it can never suffer any diminution. Oh, Christian, lay hold of this precious thought; I may not be able to state it except in weak terms, but let not my weakness pre-

vent your apprehending its glory and its preciousness. It is enough to make a man leap, though his legs were loaded with irons, and to make him sing though his mouth were stopped, to think that we are perfectly accepted in Christ, that our justification is not partial; it does not go to a limited extent, but goes the whole way. Our unrighteousness is covered; from condemnation we are entirely and irrevocably free.

Once more. The non-condemnation is *effectual.* The royal privilege of justification shall never miscarry. It shall be brought home to every believer. In the reign of King George the Third, the son of a member of this church lay under sentence of death for forgery. My predecessor, Dr. Rippon, after incredible exertions, obtained a promise that his sentence should be remitted. By a singular occurrence, the present senior deacon—then a young man—learned from the governor of the jail that the reprieve had not been received; and the unhappy prisoner would have been executed the next morning, had not Dr. Rippon gone post-haste to Windsor, obtained an interview with the king in his bedchamber, and received from the monarch's own hand a copy of that reprieve which had been negligently put aside by a thoughtless officer. "I charge you, doctor," said his majesty, "to make good speed." "Trust me, sire, for that," responded your old pastor, and he returned to London in time, just in time, and only just in time, for the prisoner was being marched with many others on to the scaffold. Ay, that pardon might have been given, and yet the man might have been executed if it had not been effectually carried out. But, blessed be God, our non-condemnation is an effectual thing. It is not a matter of letter, it is a matter of fact. Ah, poor souls, you know that condemnation is a matter of fact. When you and I suffered in our souls, and were brought under the heavy hand of the law, we felt that its curses were no mock thunders like the wrath of the Vatican, but they were real; we felt that the anger of God was indeed a thing to tremble at; a real substantial fact. Now, just as real as the condemnation which Justice brings, just so real is the justification which mercy bestows. You are not only nominally guiltless, but you are really so, if you believe in Christ; you are not only nominally put into the place of the innocent,

but you are really put there the moment you believe in Jesus. Not only is it said that your sins are gone, but they are gone. Not only does God look on you as though you were accepted; you are accepted. It is a matter of fact to you, as much a matter of fact as that you sinned. You do not doubt that you have sinned, you cannot doubt that; do not doubt then that when you believe, your sins are put away. For as certain as ever the black spot fell on you when you sinned, so certainly and so surely was it all washed out when you were bathed in that fountain filled with blood, which was drawn from Emanuel's veins.

Come, my soul, think thou of this. Thou art actually and effectually cleared from guilt. Thou art led out of thy prison. Thou art no more in fetters as a bond-slave. Thou art delivered now from the bondage of the law. Thou art freed from sin and thou canst walk at large as a freeman. Thy Saviour's blood has procured thy full discharge. Come, my soul, thou hast a right now to come to thy Father's feet. No flames of vengeance are there to scare thee now; no fiery sword; justice cannot smite the innocent. Come, my soul, thy disabilities are taken away. Thou wast unable once to see thy Father's face; thou canst see it now. Thou couldst not speak with him, nor he with thee; but now thou hast access with boldness to this grace wherein we stand. Once there was a fear of hell upon thee; there is no hell for thee now. How can there be punishment for the guiltless? He that believeth is guiltless, is not condemned, and cannot be punished. No frowns of an avenging God now. If God be viewed as a Judge, how should he frown upon the guiltless? How should the Judge frown upon the absolved one? More than all the privileges thou mightest have enjoyed if thou hadst never sinned, are thine now that thou art justified. All the blessings which thou couldst have had if thou hadst kept the law and more, are thine to-night because Christ has kept it for thee. All the love and the acceptance which a perfectly obedient being could have obtained of God, belong to thee, because Christ was perfectly obedient on thy behalf, and hath imputed all his merits to thy account that thou mightest be exceeding rich, through him who for thy sake became exceeding poor.

Oh that the Holy Spirit would but enlarge our hearts, that we

might suck sweetness out of these thoughts! There is no condemnation. Moreover, there never shall be any condemnation. The forgiveness is not partial, but perfect; it is so effectual that it delivers us from all the penalties of the Law, gives to us all the privileges of obedience, and puts us actually high above where we should have been had we never sinned. It fixes our standing more secure than it was before we fell. We are not now where Adam was, for Adam might fall and perish. We are rather where Adam would have been if we could suppose God had put him into the garden for seven years, and said, "If you are obedient for seven years, your time of probation shall be over, and I will reward you." The children of God in one sense may be said to be in a state of probation. In another sense there is no probation. There is no probation as to whether the child of God should be saved. He is saved already; his sins are washed away; his righteousness is complete: and if that righteousness could endure a million of years' probation, it would never be defiled. In fact, it always stands the same in the sight of God, and must do so forever and ever.

II. Let me now endeavor to CORRECT SOME MISAPPREHENSIONS, BY REASON OF WHICH CHRISTIANS ARE OFTEN CAST DOWN.

How childish we are in spiritual things! We think that our being pardoned involves a great many things which we afterwards find have nothing whatever to do with our pardon. For instance, we think we shall never sin again; we fancy that the battle is all fought; that we have got into a fair field, with no more war to wage; that in fact we have got the victory, and have only just to stand up and wave the palm branch; that God has only to call us up to himself and we shall enter into heaven without having to fight any enemies upon earth Now, all these are obvious mistakes. Though the text has a great meaning, it does not mean anything of this kind. Observe, that although it does assert, "He that believeth is not condemned;" yet it does not say that he that believeth shall not have his faith exercised. Your faith will be exercised. An untried faith will be no faith at all. God never gave men faith without intending to try it. Faith is received for the very purpose of endurance. Just as

our Rifle Corps friends put up the target with the intention of shooting at it, so does God give faith with the intention of letting trials and troubles, and sin and Satan aim all their darts at it. When thou hast faith in Christ, it is a great privilege; but recollect that it involves a great trial. You asked for great faith the other night; did you consider that you asked for great troubles too? You cannot have great faith to lay up and rust. Mr. Greatheart in John Bunyan's Pilgrim was a very strong man, but then what strong work he had to do. He had to go with all those women and children many scores of times up to the celestial city and back again; he had to fight all the giants, and drive back all the lions; to slay the giant Slaygood, and knock down the Castle of Despair.

If you have a great measure of faith, you will have need to use it all. You will never have a single scrap to spare, you will be like the virgins in our Lord's parable, even though you be a wise virgin, you will have to say to others who might borrow of you, "Not so, lest there be not enough for us and for you." But when your faith is exercised with trials, do not think you are brought into judgment for your sins. Oh no, believer, there is plenty of exercise, but that is not condemnation; there are many trials, but still we are justified; we may often be buffetted, but we are never accursed; we may ofttimes be cast down, but the sword of the Lord never can and never will smite us to the heart. Yea, more; not only may our faith be exercised, but our faith may come to a very low ebb, and still we may not be condemned. When thy faith gets so small that thou canst not see it, even then still thou art not condemned. If thou hast ever believed in Jesus, thy faith may be like the sea when it goes out a very long way from the shore, and leaves a vast track of mud, and some might say the sea was gone or dried up. But you are not condemned when your faith is most dried up. Ay! and I dare to say it,—when your faith is at the flood-tide, you are not more accepted then, than when your faith is at the lowest ebb; for your acceptance does not depend upon the quantity of your faith, it only depends upon its reality. If you are really resting in Christ, though your faith may be but as a spark, and a thousand devils may try to quench that one spark,

yet you are not condemned—you shall stand accepted in Christ. Though your comforts will necessarily decay as your faith declines, yet your acceptance does not decay. Though faith does rise and fall like the thermometer, all weathers change it—yet God's love is not affected by the weather of earth, or the changes of time. Until the perfect righteousness of Christ can be a mutable thing—a football to be kicked about by the feet of fiends—your acceptance with God can never change. You are, you must be, perfectly accepted in the Beloved.

There is another thing which often tries the child of God. He at times loses the light of his Father's countenance. Now, remember, the text does not say, "He that believeth shall not lose the light of God's countenance;" he may do so, but he shall not be condemned for all that. You may walk, not only for days but for months, in such a state that you have little fellowship with Christ, very little communion with God of a joyous sort. The promises may seem broken to you, the Bible may afford you but little comfort; and when you turn your eye to heaven, you may only have to feel the more the smarting that is caused by your Father's rod; you may have vexed and grieved his Spirit, and he may have turned away his face from you. But you are not condemned for all that. Mark the testimony: "He that believeth is not condemned." Even when your Father smites you and leaves a wale at every stroke, and brings the blood at every blow, there is not a particle of condemnation in any one stroke. Not in his anger, but in his dear covenant love he smites you. There is as unmixed and unalloyed affection in every love-stroke of chastisement from your Father's hand as there is in the kisses of Jesus Christ's lips. Oh! believe this; it will tend to lift up thy heart, it will cheer thee when neither sun nor moon appear. It will honor thy God, it will show thee where thy acceptance really lies. When his face is turned away, believe him still, and say, "He abideth faithful though he hide his face from me."

I will go a little further still. The child of God may be so assaulted by Satan, that he may be well nigh given up to despair, and yet he is not condemned. He may read the Bible, and think that every threatening is against him, and that every

promise shuts its mouth and will not cheer him: and he may at last despond, and despond, till he is ready to break the harp that has so long been hanging on the willow. He may say, "The Lord hath forsaken me quite, my God will be gracious no more;" but it is not true. Yea, he may be ready to swear a thousand times that God's mercy is clean gone for ever, and that his faithfulness will fail for evermore; but it is not true, it is not true. A thousand liars swearing to a falsehood could not make it true, and our doubts and fears are all of them liars. And if there were ten thousand of them, and they all professed the same, it is a falsehood that God ever did forsake his people, or that he ever cast from him an innocent man; and you are innocent, remember, when you believe in Jesus. "But," say you, "I am full of sin." "Ay," say I, "but that sin has been laid on Christ." "Oh," say you, "but I sin daily." "Ay," say I, "but that sin was laid on him before you committed it, years ago. It is not yours; Christ has taken it away once for all. You are a righteous man by faith, and God will not forsake the righteous, nor will he cast away the innocent." I say, then, the child of God may have his faith at a low ebb; he may lose the light of his Father's countenance, and he may even get into thorough despair; but yet all these cannot disprove my text—"He that believeth is not condemned."

"But what," say you, "if the child of God should sin?" It is a deep and tender subject, yet must we touch it and be bold here. I would not mince God's truth lest any should make a bad use of it. I know there are some, not the people of God, who will say, "Let us sin, that grace may abound." Their condemnation is just. I cannot help the perversion of truth. There be always men who will take the best of food as though it were poison, and make the best of truth into a lie, and so be damning their own souls. You ask, "What if a child of God should fall into sin?" I answer, the child of God does fall into sin; every day he mourns and groans because when he would do good, evil is present with him. But though he falls into sins, he is not condemned for all that—not by one of them, or by all of them put together, because his acceptance does not depend upon himself, but upon the perfect righteousness of Christ; and that per

fect righteousness is not invalidated by any sins of his. He is perfect in Christ; and until Christ is imperfect, the imperfections of the creature do not mar the justification of the believer in the sight of God. But oh! if he fall into some glaring sin,—Oh God, keep us from it!—if he fall into some glaring sin, he shall go with broken bones, but he shall reach heaven for all that. Though, in order to try him and let him see his vileness, he be suffered to go far astray, yet he that bought him will not lose him; he that chose him will not cast him away: he will say unto him, "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." David may go never so far away, but David is not lost. He comes back and he cries, "Have mercy upon me, O God!" And so shall it be with every believing soul—Christ shall bring him back. Though he slip, he shall be kept, and all the chosen seed shall meet around the throne. If it were not for this last truth—though some may stick at it—what would become of some of God's people? They would be given up to despair. If I have been speaking to a backslider, I pray he will not make a bad use of what I have said. Let me say to him, "Poor backslider! thy father's bowels yearn over thee; he has not erased thy name out of the registry. Come back, come back now to him and say, 'Receive me graciously, and love me freely;' and he will say, 'I will put you among the children.' He will pass by your backsliding and will heal your iniquities; and you shall yet stand once more in his favor, and know yourself to be still accepted in the Redeemer's righteousness and saved by his blood." This text does not mean that the child of God shall not be tried, or that he shall not even sometimes fall under the trial; but it does mean this, once for all: He that believeth on Christ is not condemned. At no time, by no means, is he under the sentence of condemnation, but is evermore justified in the sight of God.

III. Now, let me notice WHAT THIS TEXT EVIDENTLY INCLUDES; and may God grant that these few words may nevertheless do good to our souls!

"He that believeth on him is not condemned." If we are not condemned, then at no time does God ever look upon his

children, when they believe in Christ, as being guilty. Are you surprised that I should put it so? I put it so again: from the moment when you believe in Christ, God ceases to look upon you as being guilty; for he never looks upon you apart from Christ. You often look upon yourself as guilty, and you fall upon your knees as you should do, and you weep and lament; but even then, while you are weeping over inbred and actual sin, he is still saying out of heaven, "So far as your justification is concerned, thou art all fair and lovely." You are black as the tents of Kedar—that is yourself by nature; you are fair as the curtains of Solomon—that is yourself in Christ. You are black —that is yourself in Adam; but comely, that is yourself in the second Adam. Oh, think of that!—that you are always in God's sight comely, always in God's sight lovely, always in God's sight as though you were perfect. For ye are complete in Christ Jesus, and perfect in Christ Jesus, as the apostle puts it in another place. Always do you stand completely washed and fully clothed in Christ. Remember this; for it is certainly included in my text.

Another great thought included in my text is this; you are never liable as a believer to punishment for your sins. You will be chastised on account of them, as a father chastises his child; that is a part of the Gospel dispensation; but you will not be smitten for your sins as a lawgiver smites the criminal. Your Father may often punish you as he punisheth the wicked. But never for the same reason. The ungodly stand on the ground of their own demerits; their sufferings are awarded as their due deserts. But your sorrows do not come to you as a matter of desert; they come to you as a matter of love. God knows that in one sense your sorrows are such a privilege that you may account of them as a boon you do not deserve. I have often thought of that when I have had a sore trouble." I know some people say, "you deserved the trouble." Yes, my dear brethren, but there is not enough merit in all the Christians put together, to deserve such a good thing as the loving rebuke of our heavenly Father. Perhaps you cannot see that; you cannot think that a trouble can come to you as a real blessing in the covenant. But I know that the rod of the cove-

nant is as much the gift of grace as the blood of the covenant. It is not a matter of desert or merit; it is given to us because we need it. But I question whether we were ever so good as to deserve it. We were never able to get up to so high a standard as to deserve so rich, so gracious a providence as this covenant blessing—the rod of our chastening God. Never at any time in your life has a law-stroke fallen upon you. Since you believed in Christ you are out of the law's jurisdiction. The law of England cannot touch a Frenchman while he lives under the protection of his own Emperor. You are not under the law, but you are under grace. The law of Sinai cannot touch you, for you are out of its jurisdiction. You are not in Sinai or in Arabia. You are not the son of Hagar or the son of a handmaid, you are the son of Sarah, and are come to Jerusalem and are free. You are out of Arabia, and are come to God's own happy land. You are a child of promise, and you shall have God's own inheritance. Believe this, that never shall a law-stroke fall on you; never shall God's anger in a judicial sense drop on you. He may give you a chastising stroke, not as the result of sin, but rather as the result of his own rich grace, that would get the sin out of you, that you may be perfected in sanctification, even as you are now perfect and complete before him in the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ.

IV. I must spend the last minute or two in saying WHAT THIS TEXT EXCLUDES.

What does it exclude? Well, I am sure it excludes *boasting*. "He that believeth is not condemned." Ah! if it said, "He that *worketh* is not condemned," then you and I might boast in any quantity. But when it says, "*He that believeth*"—why there is no room for us to say half a word for old self. No, Lord, if I am not condemned, it is thy free grace, for I have deserved to be condemned a thousand times since I have been in this pulpit to-night. When I am on my knees, and I am not condemned, I am sure it must be sovereign grace, for even when I am praying, I deserve to be condemned. Even when we are repenting we are sinning, and adding to our sins while we are repenting of

them. Every act we do, as the result of the flesh, is to sin again, and our best performances are so stained with sin, that it is hard to know whether they are good works or bad works. So far as they are our own, they are bad, and so far as they are the works of the Spirit, they are good. But then the goodness is not ours, it is the Spirit's, and only the evil remains to us. Ah, then, we cannot boast! Begone, pride! begone! The Christian must be a humble man. If he lift up his head to say something, then he is nothing indeed. He does not know where he is, or where he stands, when he once begins to boast, as though his own right hand had gotten him the victory. Leave off boasting, Christian. Live humbly before thy God, and never let a word of self-congratulation escape thy lips. Sacrifice self, and let thy song be before the throne—"Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name be glory forever."

What next does the text exclude? Methinks it ought to exclude—(now I am about to smite myself)—it ought to exclude *doubts and fears.* "He that believeth is not condemned." How dare you and I draw such long faces, and go about as we do sometimes as though we had a world of cares upon our backs? What would I have given ten or eleven years ago if I could have known this text was sure to me, that I was not condemned. Why, I thought if I could feel I was once forgiven, and had to live on bread and water, and be locked up in a dungeon, and every day be flogged with a cat-o'-nine tails, I would gladly have accepted it, if I could have once felt my sins forgiven. Now, you are a forgiven man, and yet you are cast down! Oh! shame on you. No condemnation! and yet miserable? Fie, Christian! Get thee up, and wipe the tears from your eyes. Oh! if there be a person lying in jail now, to be executed next week, if you could go to him and say, "You are pardoned," would he not spring up with delight from his seat, and although he might have lost his goods, and though it would be possible for him, after pardon, to have to suffer many things, yet, so long as life was spared, what would all this be to him? He would feel that it was less than nothing. Now, Christian, you are pardoned, your sins are all forgiven. Christ has said to you, "Thy sins, which are many, are all forgiven thee"—and art thou yet mis

erable? Well, if we must be so sometimes, let us make it as short as we can. If we must be sometimes cast down, let us ask the Lord to lift us up again. I am afraid some of us get into bad habits, and come to make it a matter of practice to be downcast. Mind, Christian, mind, it will grow upon you—that peevish spirit—if you do not resist that sinfulness at first, it will get worse with you. If you do not come to God to turn these doubts and fears out of you, they will soon swarm upon you like flies in Egypt. When you are able to kill the first great doubt, you will perhaps kill a hundred; for one great doubt will breed a thousand, and to kill the mother is to kill the whole brood. Therefore, look with all thy eyes against the first doubt, lest thou shouldst become confirmed in thy despondency, and grow into sad despair. "He that believeth on him is not condemned." If this excludes boasting, it ought to exclude doubts too.

Once more. "He that believeth on him is not condemned." This excludes *sinning* any more. My Lord, have I sinned against thee so many times, and yet hast thou freely forgiven me all? What stronger motive could I have for keeping me from sinning again? Ah, there are some who are saying this is licentious doctrine. A thousand devils rolled into one, must the man be who can find any licentiousness here. What! go and sin because I am forgiven? Go and live in iniquity because Jesus Christ took my guilt and suffered in my room and stead? Human nature is bad enough, but methinks this is the very worst state of human nature, when it tries to draw an argument for sin from the free grace of God. Bad as I am, I do feel this, that it is hard to sin against a pardoning God. It is far harder to sin against the blood of Christ, and against a sense of pardon, than it is against the terrors of the law and the fear of hell itself. I know that when my soul is most alarmed by a dread of the wrath of God, I can sin with comfort compared with what I can when I have a sense of his love shed abroad in my heart. What more monstrous! to read your title clear, and sin? Oh, vile rebrobate! you are on the borders of the deepest hell. But I am sure, if you are a child of God, you will say when you have read your title clear, and feel yourself justified in Christ Jesus,

"Now, for the love I bear his name,
What was my gain, I count my loss;
My former pride I call my shame,
And nail my glory to his cross."

Yes, and I must and will esteem all things but loss for Jesus' sake. O may my soul be found in him, perfect in his righteousness! This will make you live near to him; this will make you like unto him. Do not think that this doctrine, by dwelling on it, will make you think lightly of sin. It will make you think of it as a hard and stern executioner to put Christ to death; as an awful load that could never be lifted from you except by the eternal arm of God; and then you will come to hate it with all your soul, because it is rebellion against a loving and gracious God, and you shall by this means, far better than by any Arminian doubts, or any legal quibbles, be led to walk in the footsteps of your Lord Jesus, and to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.

I think this whole sermon, though I have been preaching to the children of God, is meant for sinners too. Sinner, I would that thou didst say so. If you know this, that *he that believeth is not condemned*, then sinner, if thou believest, thou wilt not be condemned; and may all I have said to-night help you to this belief in thy soul. Oh, but sayest thou, "May I trust Christ?" As I said this morning, it is not a question of whether you may or may not, you are commanded. The Scripture commands the gospel to be preached to every creature, and the gospel is, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." I know you will be too proud to do it, unless God by his grace should humble you. But if ye feel to-night that you are nothing, and have nothing of your own, I think you will be right glad to take Christ to be your all-in-all. If you can say with poor Jack, the Huckster—

"I'm a poor sinner and nothing at all,"

You may go on and say with him, this night,

"But Jesus Christ is my all in all."

God grant that it may be so, for his name's sake. AMEN.

SERMON XVIII.

THE CHAFF DRIVEN AWAY.

[Exceedingly pointed and searching, this sermon is full of truth terrible to the wicked. It is direct, lucid and earnest; very severe no doubt it would be thought by those to whom it was specially addressed. Its illustrations, mainly suggested by the figure in the text, are apt, forcible, and full of life. It is one of those subjects in which the preacher's peculiar power over an audience is seen to advantage. He mentions this sermon as one which had been specially blessed to the saving of souls. It was preached at Surrey Music Hall, Oct. 23, 1859.]

"The ungodly are not so; but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away."—Psalm i. 4.

And who are the ungodly? Are they open and wilful sinners —men who take God's name in vain, and blaspheme—men who break the laws of man, the laws of the State—men who are scarcely to be trusted with liberty? Certainly these are included, but these are not mainly intended. While such men come under the category of "sinners" and "scorners," there is another class expressly aimed at by the term "ungodly." And who are the ungodly? Are they the men who deny God's existence, who neglect the outward forms of religion, who scoff at everything that is sacred, and make a jest of things at which angels tremble? These are included, most certainly, but neither are these the men specially aimed at. They are the scornful,

the pestilent; these are the men whose iniquities have gone beforehand to judgment against them, and whose sins are clamoring before the throne for justice. Another class of men is intended under the term "ungodly." And who are they? Surely my brethren, the answer may well strike you with awe. I do trust there are not many in this hall who may be called scorners; and, perhaps, not very many who would come under the denomination of open profligates and rebels; but how large a proportion of all those who attend our places of worship may justly be ranked under the character of the ungodly! What does this exactly mean? Let me just show its differences once again, and then more precisely define it.

We sometimes call men irreligious; and, surely, to be irreligious is bad enough; but to be religious is not good enough. A man may be religious, yet not be godly. There are many who are religious; as touching the law outwardly they are blameless; Hebrews of the Hebrews, Pharisees of the straitest sect. They neglect no rubric, they break no law of their church, they are exceedingly precise in their religion; yet, notwithstanding this, they may rank under the class of the ungodly; for to be religious is one thing, and to be godly is quite another. To be godly, then,—to come at once to the mark—to be godly is to have a constant eye to God, to recognize him in all things, to trust him, to love him, to serve him. And the ungodly man is one who does not have an eye to God in his daily business, who lives in this world as if there were no God; while he attends to all the outward ceremonies of religion, he never goes to their core, never enters into their secret heart and their deep mysteries. He sees the sacraments, but he sees not God there in; he hears the preaching, he comes up to the house of pray into the midst of the great congregation, he bows his head, but there is no present Deity to him, there is no manifest God There is no hearing of his voice, there is no bowing before his throne.

Doubtless, there is a large number here who must confess that they are not trusting in the blood of Christ, they are not influenced by the Holy Ghost, they do not love God; they can not say that the bent and tenor of their lives is towards him.

Why you have been the last six days about your business, occupying all your time,—and quite right is it to be diligent in business—but how many of you have forgotten God all the while? You have been trading for yourselves, not for God. The righteous man does everything in the name of God; at least, this is his constant desire. Whether he eats or drinks, or whatsoever he does, he desires to do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. But you have not recognised God in your shop. You have not acknowledged him in your dealings with your fellowmen. You have acted towards them as it there had been no God whatever.

And, perhaps, even this day you must confess that your heart does not love the Lord. You have never gone into his company. You do not seek retirement. You do not relish private prayer. Now God's children cannot be happy without sometimes talking to their Father. They love to cling to him. They feel that he is their life, their love, their all. Their daily cry is, "Lord, draw me to thyself; come thou to me, or draw me up to thee." They pant to know more of God; they long to reflect more of his image; they seek to keep his law; and it is their desire that they may be pervaded with his Spirit. But such are not your desires. You have no such longings as these. It is true you are not addicted to strong drink, you do not swear, you are no thief, you are no harlot. In all these things you are blameless; yet are you ungodly, being without God in the world. He is not your friend; he is not your helper. You do not cleave to him with purpose of heart. You are not his child. You have not "the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, 'Abba, Father.'" You could do as well without a God as with one. In fact you feel that the thought of God, if you think of it solemnly, strikes you with terror, and excites in your breasts no emotions of delight. You are ungodly. Well then, mark, whatever I have to say this morning, belongs to you. Don't be looking round you and saying, I wonder how this will suit my neighbour. Do not I beseech you be thinking of some thriftless loon who has spent his estate in extravagance and debauchery, but be thinking of yourself. If you are not born again, if you are not a partaker of the Spirit, if you are not

reconciled to God, if your sins be not forgiven, if you are not this day a living member of the living church of Christ, all the curses that are written in this book belong to you, and that part of them in particular which it will be my solemn business to thunder out this morning. I pray God that this part may be applied to your soul, that you may be made to tremble before the Most High, and seek him who will certainly be found of you, if you seek him with all your hearts.

You will readily perceive that my text may be divided into three parts. You have, first, *a fearful negative*—"The ungodly are not so." You have in the next place a *terrible comparison*—"They are *like the chaff*." Then you have, thirdly, *an awful prophesy*—"which the *wind driveth away*."

I. First, then, you have here A FEARFUL NEGATIVE. The vulgate Latin version, the Arabic and Septuagint, read this first sentence thus:—"Not so the ungodly, not so;" for according to their version there is a double negative here—"Not so the ungodly, not so." Now in order to understand what is meant by this negative you must read the third verse. The righteous man is said to be "like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper:"—"Not so the ungodly, not so."

The ungodly are not like *a tree planted*. If they may be compared to a tree at all, they are as trees "twice dead, plucked up by the roots;" or if they are to be compared to anything that hath life, then are they like the tree in the desert which is planted there by a chance hand, which hath nought to nourish it. It is the peculiar characteristic of the Christian man, that he is like "a tree planted." That is to say, there is a special providence exercised in his position and in his culture. You all know the difference between a tree that is planted and a tree that is self-sown. The tree that is planted in the garden is visited by the husbandman. He digs about it; he dungs it; he trims it, prunes it, and looks for its fruit. It is an object of property and of special care. The wild tree in the forest, the tree which is self sown upon the plain, no one owns, no one

watches over it; no heart will sigh if the lightning flash shall shiver it; no tear will be wept if the blast should light upon it, and all its leaves should wither. It is no man's property. It shelters no man's roof. No man careth for it. Let it die, who doth it stand there to suck nourishment from the soil and yield none again.

The ungodly are, it is true, the subjects of a general providence, even as everything is ordered of God; but the righteous have a special providence over them. They are *trees planted.* Everything which takes place works together for their good. The Lord their God is their guardian. He watches the earth that it should bring forth for them its fruit. The precious things of the heavens, the dew, and the deep that coucheth beneath, and the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, and the precious things put forth by the moon—these are their heritage. He watcheth everything round about them. If pestilence stalk through the land, he permitteth not one of its shafts to hit, unless he seeth it is for good. If war ariseth, behold he stretches his ægis over his children; and if famine comes, they shall be fed, and in the days of scarcity they shall be satisfied. Is it not a glorious thing for the Christian to know that the very hairs of his head are all numbered, that the angels of God keep watch and ward over him; that the Lord is his shepherd, and therefore, he shall not want? I know this is a doctrine that often comforts me. Let what will happen, if I can but fall back upon the thought that there is a providence in everything, what do I need? A providence in the great and in the little there assuredly is to every child of God. It may be said of every tree of the Lord's right hand planting—"I the Lord do keep it, and will water it every moment; lest any hurt it I will watch it night and day." Upon the righteous there are not only ten eyes, but there are all the eyes of the Omniscient ever fixed both by night and day. The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous. They are like the planted tree. Not so ye that are ungodly; there is no special providence for you. To whom will ye carry your troubles? Where is your shelter in the day of wrath? Where is your shield in the hour of battle? Who shall be your sun when darkness shall gather about you? Who

shall comfort you when your troubles shall encompass you round? You have no eternal arm to lean upon. You have no compassionate heart to beat for you. You have no loving eye to watch you. You are left alone! alone! alone! like the heath in the desert, or like the forest tree which no man regardeth, until the time comes when the sharpened axe shall be lifted up, and the tree must fall. "Not so," then "the ungodly, not so." 'Tis a fearful negative the ungodly man is not the object of the special providence of God.

2. The righteous man is like a tree planted by the *rivers of water*. Now, a tree that is planted by the rivers of water sends out its roots, and they soon draw sufficient nourishment. The tree that is planted far away upon the arid desert hath its times of drought; it depends upon the casual thunder-cloud that sweeps over it, and distils the scanty drops of rain. But this tree planted by rivers of water hath a perennial supply. It knows no drought, no time of scarcity. Its roots have but to suck up the nourishment which pours itself lavishly there. "Not so the ungodly, not so." They have no such rivers from which to suck their joy, their comfort, and their life. As for the believer, come what may, he can say—if earth shall fail him, then will he look to heaven. If man forsake him, then he looks to the divine man Christ Jesus. If the world should shake, his inheritance is on high. If everything should pass away, he hath a portion that can never be dissolved. He is planted not by brooks that may be dried up, far less in a desert, which only hath a scanty share, but by the rivers of water. Oh, my beloved brethren, you and I know something about what this means. We know what it is to drink of the rivers of Christ's fulness. We know what it is to partake and satisfy ourselves as with marrow and fatness. Well may we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, for our storehouse is inexhaustible, our riches can never be spent. We have wealth that can not be counted, a treasury that never can be drained. This is our glory, that we have a something to rely upon which can never fail us. We are trees planted by the rivers of water.

Ah! but not so you that are ungodly, not so. Your days of drought shall come. You may rejoice now, but what will you do

upon the bed of sickness, when fever shall make you toss from side-to-side, when head and heart shall be racked with anguish, when death shall stare upon you, and shall glaze your eyes? What will ye do when ye come into the swellings of Jordan? You have joys to-day, but where will be your joys then? You have wells now, but what will you do when these are all stopped up, when these shall all fail, when your skin-bottles are dried, when your broken cisterns have emptied themselves of their last drop—what will ye do then, ye ungodly? Surely this negative is full of awful threatenings to you. You may have a little mirth and merriment now, you may enjoy a little excitement at present, but what will ye do when the hot wind comes upon you—the wind of tribulation? And above all, what will you do when the chilling blast of death shall freeze your blood? Ah, where, oh where will you then look? You will look no longer to friends, nor to the comforts of home. You cannot find in the hour of death consolation on the bosom of the most loving wife; you will be quite unable then to find peace in all your riches or your treasures. As for your past life, however good it may seem, if you are ungodly, you will find no comfort in the retrospect; and as for the future, you will find no comfort in the prospect; for there will be for you nothing but "a fearful looking for of judgment and of fiery indignation." Oh, my ungodly friends, I beseech you, think upon this matter, for if there were nothing worse, the first sentence of my text sounds like the trumpets of doom, and hath in it bitterness like the vials of the Revelation.

3. It is said of the righteous man, that he "*bringeth forth his fruit in his season.*" "Not so the ungodly, not so;" they bring forth no fruit; or if there be here and there a shrivelled grape upon the vine, it is brought forth in the wrong season, when the genial heat of the sun cannot ripen it, and therefore it is sear and worthless. Many people imagine that if they do not commit positive sin, they are all right. Now let me give you a little sermon in the midst of my sermon. Here is the text: "Curse ye, Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty." First, what

has Meroz done? Nothing. Secondly, is Meroz cursed? Yes; cursed bitterly. What for?—for doing nothing? Yes, for doing nothing. "Curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof," for what they did not do, "because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty." Did Meroz fight against God? No. Did Meroz put on a buckler and lay hold on shield and spear and go forth against the Most High? No. What did Meroz do? Nothing. And is it cursed? Yes, cursed bitterly, with the inhabitants thereof, "because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty." Preach that sermon to yourselves when you get home. Draw it out at length, and perhaps while you are sitting down you will say, "Meroz! why that is myself. I don't fight against God, I am no enemy to Christ, I do not persecute his people; in fact I even love his ministers, I love to go up and hear the Word preached. I should not be happy if I spent my Sunday anywhere but in God's house. But still that must mean me, for I do not go up 'to the help of the Lord against the mighty.' I do nothing. I am a fruitless tree. Ah, then, remember you are cursed, and cursed bitterly, too. Not for what you do, but for what you don't do.

So here it is one of the sad curses of the ungodly—that they bring forth no fruit in their season. Why, look at many of you. What is the good of you in this world? With regard to your families, you are their main-stay and prop. God bless you in your work, and may you train up your children well. But as to the church, what good are you? You occupy a seat, you have had it these years; how do you know but that you have been occupying a seat which might have been the place where some other sinner would have been converted had he been there? It is true you sit and hear the sermon; yes, but what of that, if that sermon shall add to your condemnation? It is true that you make one among many, but what if you should be a black sheep in the midst of the flock! What are you doing for Christ? Of what value are you? Have you added one stone to his spiritual temple? Have you done as much as the poor woman who broke the alabaster box upon his head? You have done nothing for him. He has nourished you and brought you up, and you

have done nothing for him. "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib," but you do not know, you do not consider. Behold, the Lord hath a controversy with you this day, not for what you have done, but for what you have not done. He has sent you the ministry; you are invited every Sabbath-day. You are hearing the Word continually; you are enjoying privileges. God is feeding you in his providence, clothing you in his compassion, and you are doing nothing for him. You are a cumberer of the ground, bringing forth no fruit at all. Oh, my dear hearer, I beseech thee lay this to heart, for this is a curse as well as a sign to you. It is not only a bad trait in thy character, but it is a curse from God. Thou art ungodly, and therefore fruitless. Thou lovest him not, therefore thou art useless. Thou trustest not in Christ, and therefore thou art not like the tree which "bringeth forth his fruit in his season."

4. "His leaf also shall not wither. Not so the ungodly, not so." The ungodly man's leaf *shall* wither. I see before me this day many proofs that God's promise is verified to his people. Look round, and behold what a large number of grey-headed men assemble every Lord's day to hear the Word. There are many of them who loved Christ in their youth. Then they had "a joy unspeakable and full of glory" in making a profession of his dear name; and now they have come into what men call the sear and yellow leaf of life, but they do not find it so, for they still bring forth fruit in old age, they are still fat and flourishing to show that the Lord is upright. Their leaf has not withered, they are just as active in the cause of Christ as ever they were, and perhaps ten times more happy. Instead of bringing forth no fruit, they bring forth richer and more luscious clusters than ever they did before. Walking in the midst of the younger ones, they shine as lights in the midst of the world; or to return to the simile, they are like trees whose branches hang down by reason of the abundance of their fruit, even as their heads bow down by reason of the abundance of their years. What a mercy it is, dear brethren, to have Christ for your portion in youth, and such a Christ too as will last us all our life long. To see good old Rowland Hill preaching when he was

tottering on the borders of the grave and talking of the faithfulness of Christ—what a glorious sight! There was a proof! That leaf did not wither. Was there ever a tree like this that would maintain its greenness eighty years and yet not wither? Was there ever a religion like this that would make the old men youthful and make their tottering feet leap for joy? And yet this is the religion of Christ. Our leaf withers not.

But oh, "not so the ungodly, not so." Your leaf shall wither; at least when they that look out of the windows are darkened, when the grinders fail because they are few, when your days of old age shall come upon you, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, if not before, shall your leaf wither. But how many there are whose leaves do wither! There comes a blight from God, and the tree which looked once green becomes brown and dead, and at last it blackens and has to be removed. We have seen such in our lives,—men that seemed to be getting on in this world, rich and happy, and respected by almost every body, but they had no solid background, they had no rock to stand on, no God to trust to. I have seen them spreading themselves like a green bay tree, and I have often envied them as the Psalmist did, but "I looked, and lo they were not;" I passed by and lo there was not so much as a stump of them left; God had cursed their habitation; as a dream when one awaketh, their image had been despised; as the wax before the fire, they had melted away; like the fat of rams had they been consumed; into smoke did they consume away. "Not so the ungodly not so," says the text, and surely experience proves it, the ungodly man's leaf must and shall wither. And then it is added concerning the righteous man, "Whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." Godly men, it is true, have many tribulations, but I am not sure that they have more than the wicked. I do think that when a man is converted he will find it to be true that religion's "ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace," and he has a better hope of even worldly prosperity when he becomes a Christian, than the ungodly man has.

Christian habits are the best business habits, if men would but believe it. When a man mixes his religion with his business, and allows every act of his life to be guided by it, he stands the

best chance in this world, if I may be allowed such a secular expression, for "honesty is the best policy" after all, and Christianity is the best honesty. The sharp, cutting competition of the times may be called honesty; it is only called so *down here*, it is not called so *up there*, for there is a good deal of cheating in it. Honesty in the highest sense—Christian honesty—will be found, after all, to be the best policy in everything, and there will ordinarily be a prosperity, even worldly prosperity, attending a good man in the patient, industrious pursuit of his calling. But if he does not have that success he craves, still there is one thing he knows, he would have it if it were best for him. I often hear Christian men talk in this fashion: "Well, I do but very little business," says one, "but I have enough coming in to live upon comfortably and happy. I never cared much for push and competition; I never felt that I was fit for it, and I sometimes thank God that I never thrust myself out into the rough stream, but that I was content to keep along shore." And I have marked this one thing, and, as a matter of fact, I know it cannot be disproved, that many such humble-minded men are the very best of Christians, they live the happiest lives, and whatsoever they do certainly does prosper, for they get what they expected, though they did not expect much, and they get what they want, though their wants are not very large. They are not going in for anything very great, and therefore they do not come out plucked and empty-handed, but they just hold on their way, looking to Providence constantly for their supplies, and they have all they require; and whatsoever they do prospers. But they can say, 'oo, that even if they had lost their all, if they had been brought to poverty, they would have felt poverty itself was the best prosperity, for God would have made their souls prosperous, even though their outward estates had become less.

"Not so the ungodly, not so." Whatever an ungodly man gets, be it little or be it much, is loss to him. He puts his money into a bag that is full of holes. If he saves it, it corrupts and rusts. If he spends it, it does him little service. The man that hath no God, hath no prosperity. Is he fat—he fattens for the slaughter! Is he in adversity—behold, the first drops of the fated storm have begun to fall on him. To the ungodly man

there is nothing good in this life. The sweet that he tasteth is the sweetness of poison. That which looketh fair is but as paint upon the harlot's face, beneath there is loathsomeness and disease. There may be a greenness and a verdure upon the mound, but within there lies the rotting carcass, the loathsomeness of corruption. Whatsoever the believer doth, it shall prosper. "Not so the ungodly, not so." Surely this first part of my text is quite bad enough—to have the gate of blessedness shut against you, to have the promises denied to you, to be without the blessing which is given to the godly—this punishment of the lost surely were enough to make us start in dismay.

II. Listen awhile to the TERRIBLE COMPARISON.

"The ungodly are like the chaff." They are not like the wild tree, for that hath life, and they are dead in sin. They are not compared here even to the dead tree plucked up by the roots, for that may be of some service. Floating down the stream, the hand of poverty may recall it from the water, and kindle its fire and relieve its cold. They are not even like the heath in the desert, for it hath some uses, and tends to cheer the arid waste. They are like nothing that hath life, nothing that is of any value. They are here said to be like chaff which the wind driveth away. Now you will at once see how terrible is this figure, if you look at it a moment. They are like chaff. Chaff envelops good corn, but when the wheat is cut down and carried into the barn, the corn alone is useful, the grain alone is looked at, and that chaff which has grown side by side with the good living wheat, is now become utterly useless, and is to be separated and driven away. And the wicked are compared to chaff—think for a moment, of two or three reasons.

First, because they are sapless and fruitless. Chaff hath no sap of life in itself. It is of no use, of no service. Men do but desire to get rid of it. They take the fan into their hands that they may thoroughly purge their floor. They cast up the wheat before the wind with the winnowing shovel, that the breath of the air may blow away the chaff, and leave the wheat pure. All that they care for the chaff is that they may get rid of it, that it may be blown away to waste, for it is sapless and fruitless.

Then, again, you notice that it is light and unstable. The wind sweeps through the wheat, the wheat remains unmoved, the chaff flies away. When cast up in the shovel, the wheat soon finds its place, and returns to the spot from which it has been lifted up; but the chaff is light, it has no stability. Every eddying wind, every breath moves it and carries it away. So are the ungodly. They have nothing stable; they are light, they are but as the froth upon the water; they are but as a bubble on the breaker, seen to-day and gone, here and there, and then carried away forever.

Again, the wicked are compared to chaff because it is base and worthless. Who will buy it? Who cares for it? In the East, at least, no use whatever can be made of it. They are content to burn it up and get rid of it, and the sooner they are rid of it, the better pleased are they. So is it with the wicked. They are good for nothing, useless in this world, useless in the world to come. They are the dross, the offal of all creation. The man who is ungodly, however much he may value himself, is as nothing in the estimation of God. Put a gold chain round his neck, put a star upon his breast, put a crown upon his head, and what is he but a crowned heap of dust, useless, perhaps worse than useless. Base in God's sight, he tramples them beneath his feet. The potter's vessel hath some service, and even the broken potsherd might be used. Some Job might scrape himself with it. But what shall be done with the chaff? It is of no use anywhere, and no one careth for it.

See, then, your value, my hearers, if you fear not God. Cast up your accounts and look at yourselves in the right light. You think, perhaps, that you are good for much, but God saith you are good for nothing. You are "like the chaff which the wind driveth away." I linger no more upon this comparison, but choose, rather, to dwell upon the third head, which was this:—

III. The awful prophecy contained in the verse—"They are like the chaff which the wind driveth away."

How near the chaff is to the grain! It is, in fact, its envelop; they grow together. My hearers, I wish to speak now very

pointedly and personally. How nearly related are the ungodly to the righteous! One of you, it may be, now present, an ungodly man, is the father of a godly child. You have been to that child what the chaff is to the wheat; you have nourished the child—cherished it in your bosom; you have been wrapt about it like the chaff about the grain. Is it not an awful thing for you to think that you should have been in such close relationship to a child of God, but that in the great day of division you must be separated from it? The chaff cannot be taken into heaven with the wheat. I point to another. You are the son of a godly mother; you have grown up at her knee. She taught you, when you were but a little one, to say your little prayer, and to sing the little hymn.

"Gentle Jesus, meek and mild, look upon a little child."

That mother looked upon you as her joy and her comfort. She is gone now. But you were once to her what the chaff is to the wheat. You grew, as it were, upon the same stock, you were of the same family, and her heart was wholly wrapt up in you. You were her joy and her comfort here below. Does it not cause you one pang of regret that, dying as you are, you must everlastingly be separated from her? Where she is you can never come.

Mayhap, too, I have here a mother who has lost several infants; she has been to those infants what the chaff is to the wheat—wrapt up in her bosom, for a little while she fondled them; and they, God's good wheat, have been gathered into the garner, and there they are now in Jesu's floor. There are their little spirits rejoicing before the throne of the Most High. The mother who is left thinks not of it, but she is the mother of angels, and, perhaps, herself a child of hell. Ah, mother! what think you of this? Is this separation from your child eternal? Will you be content to be found at God's great winnowing-day, the chaff, and will you be driven from your children? Shall you see them in heaven—them in heaven, and yourselves then cast out forever? Can you bear the thought? Has your heart become brutish? Is your soul harder than a nether mill-stone? Surely, if it be not, the thought of your present intimate connection

with God's people, and of your sure separation, will make you tremble. And, oh! my hearers, here are some of you sitting side by side with the godly. You sing as they sing, you hear as they hear. Perhaps you assist the outward wants of the Church. You are to the church just what the chaff is to the wheat. You are the outward husk, the congregation which surrounds the inner living nucleus of the church. And must it be —must you be separated from us? Are you content to go from the songs of the saints to the shrieks of the doomed? Will you go from the great convocation of the righteous to the last general assembly of the destroyed and cursed? The thought checks my voice. I must speak slowly on this matter for awhile.

Well, dear brethren, well I know that this thought used to be dreadful to me. My mother said to me once, after she had long prayed for me, and had come to the conviction that I was hopeless, "Ah," said she, "my son, if at the last great day you are condemned, remember your mother will say amen to your condemnation." That stung me to the quick. Must the mother that brought me forth, and that loved me, say "Amen" to my being condemned at last? Yet such things must be. Doth not the wheat say amen to the chaff being blown away? Is it not, in fact, the very prayer of the wheat that it may be separated from the chaff? and surely when that prayer is heard, and awfully answered, the wheat must say amen to the chaff being blown into fire unquenchable. Think, my dear hearers, think again. And must it be—must I bid farewell to her I love—who served the Lord in spirit. Must I see her body committed to the grave, and as I stand there, must I bid her a last, a final farewell? Must I be forever separated from her, because I fear not God, neither regard him, and therefore cannot have a portion among the Lord's chosen ones? What, have you lost your relatives forever? Are your pious fathers and mothers buried in a "sure and certain hope" to which you are strangers? Will you never sing the song of rejoicing with them in heaven? Is there never to be another salutation? Is death a gulf that cannot be bridged to you?

Oh, I hope it is the joy of some of us to know we shall meet many of our kindred above; and as we have lost one after an-

other, this has been our sweet consolation, they are gone and we shall soon follow them; they are not lost, but gone before; they are buried as to their flesh, but their souls are in Paradise, and we shall be there also; and, when we have seen our Saviour's face, and rejoiced in that glorious vision, then shall we see them also, and have deeper and purer fellowship with them than we ever had before in all the days of our lives. Well, here is a sad prophecy! The wicked are "like the chaff which the wind driveth away."

But you will remark that the awful character of my text does not appear upon the surface. They "are like the chaff which the wind *driveth away*." Where—where—where? Where are they driven? The man is in health, the sun shines, the sky is calm, the world is still about him. Suddenly there is seen a little cloud the size of a man's hand. A little signal overtakes him. The hurricane begins to rise, but first it is but a faint breath. The wicked man feels the cold air blowing on him, but he screens it with the physician, and he thinks that surely he shall live. The storm is on. God hath decreed it, and man cannot stay it. The breath becomes a wind, the wind a storm, the storm a howling hurricane. His soul is swept away. To go to heaven on angel's wings is a glorious thing; but to be swept out of this world with the wicked, is an awful thing—to be carried, not on wings of cherubs, but on the eagle wings of the wind; to be borne, not by yon songsters up to their celestial seats, but to be carried away in the midst of a howling tempest, by grim fiends. The wicked are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. I do not know how to bring out the fulness of its poetry—the great storm sweeping man from the place on which he stands. He is driven away. And now cannot your thoughts go further on, while I again repeat the question, Whither is he driven? Ah! whither is he driven?

I cannot tell you into what state that soul at once enters; that is to say, I cannot tell you by any guess of my own—that were frivolous, and were to play with a solemn matter; but I can tell you one thing, Jesus Christ himself hath said it—"he shall burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." You die, but you die not. You depart, but you depart to fire that never shall be

quenched. I will not dwell upon the topic. I return again to ask the question—"Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" Who here is prepared to make his bed in hell? Who shall lie down and rest forever in that lake of fire? You must, my hearers, if you are ungodly, except you repent. Are there none of you behind me there, who have been living without Christ, and without hope in the world? Are there none of you? Surely there are some such. I beseech you, think of your destiny—death, and after death the judgment. The wind, and after the wind the whirlwind, and after the whirlwind the fire, and after the fire—forever, forever lost, cast away, where ray of hope can never come; where eye of mercy can never look upon you, and hand of grace can never reach you. I beseech you, oh, I beseech you, by the living God, before whom you stand this day, tremble and repent. "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little." "Tophet is ordained of old, yea, for the king it is prepared; he hath made it deep and large; the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it." "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die, O house of Israel?" "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

I pray God, the Holy Spirit, to touch some ungodly hearts now. Remember, my dear hearers, if there be in your bosoms this morning one desire towards Christ, cherish it—blow the little spark till it comes to a flame. If your heart melts ever so little this morning, I beseech you resist not—quench not the heavenly influence. Yield up yourselves, and remember the sweet text of last Sunday morning, "Whosoever will, let him come and take the water of life freely." Oh that you would but come to him! Oh that ye knew how to weep for yourselves! Oh that ye knew what a fearful thing it will be to be cast away forever! Why will ye die? Is there anything pleasing in destruction? Is sin so luscious to you that you will burn in hell forever for it? Is Christ so hard a master that you will not love him? Is his cross so ugly that ye will not look towards it? I

beseech you by him whose heart is love, the crucified Redeemer, who now speaks, look to him and be saved, for he came into the world to seek and to save that which was lost, and him that cometh to him he will in no wise cast out, for "he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him."

To-day, O Spirit, bring sinners to thyself. I exhort you, sinners, lay hold on Christ. Touch the hem of his garment now. Behold, he hangs before you on the cross. As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so is Jesus lifted up. Look, I beseech you, look and live. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved. As though God did beseech you by me, I pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. And O may the Spirit make my appeal effectual! May angels rejoice this day over sinners saved and brought to know the Lord AMEN.

SERMON XIX.

CLEANSING THE LEPER.

[The Cleansing of the Leper, according to the Mosaic Ceremonial, is taken here as a type of the great and gracious work of Christ in saving souls. It is one of a class of subjects in which the Scriptures abound, full of the gospel, and deeply interesting in their analogies. This discourse was preached in Exeter Hall, Dec. 30, 1860, is remarkably accurate and complete in the treatment of the subject, and is mentioned as one that had been specially blessed in the saving of souls.]

"And if a leprosy break out abroad in the skin, and the leprosy cover all the skin of him that hath the plague from his head even to his foot, wheresoever the priest looketh; then the priest shall consider: and, behold, if the leprosy have covered all his flesh, he shall pronounce him clean that hath the plague: it is all turned white: he is clean."—Leviticus, xiii. 12. 13.

This is a singular paradox, but not a paradox to him who understands the gospel. We have great reason to thank God that the terrible disease, leprosy, which was one of the curses of the East, is so little known in our own land; and even in the few cases where leprosy has broken out in our climate, it has always assumed a far more mild and mitigated shape than it did with the Jews in the land of Canaan. Yet since they had so frightful a disease, God, in his infinite mercy, made use of it as a sort of sermon to the people. Leprosy is to be considered by us as the type of sin; and as we read the chapters in Leviticus, which concern the shutting up or putting apart, and the purification of a cleansed leper, we are to understand every sentence

as having in it a gospel sermon to us, teaching what is the condition of a sinner in the sight of God, how that sinner is to be cured, and how he can be restored to the privileges from which the leprosy of sin had utterly shut him out.

I shall need no preface, for the subject is deeply interesting. If we have come up here conscious of guilt, laden with iniquity, I am quite certain there will be somewhat in the discourse of this morning to cheer our hearts, and to send us home rejoicing in the Lord our God. Carry in your thoughts the one key to our text, namely, that leprosy is the type of sin; and I shall want you, first of all, to *see the leper*, and to *see in the leper the sinner.* After we have well looked to him we shall *bring him before the priest, and stand still while the priest examines him.* This done, and the sentence being pronounced, we shall *listen attentively to the announcement of the rites and ceremonies which were necessary in order to cleanse this leper*, which were but representations of the way whereby we too must be cleansed. And then we shall have a little time to notice *certain after-rites which follow cleansing*, which were not the cause of the cleansing itself, but necessary before the man could actually enjoy the privileges which the cleansing really gained for him.

I. First, then, contemplate the LOATHSOME AND GHASTLY SPECTACLE OF A LEPER.

A leper was extremely *loathsome in his person.* The leprosy broke out, at first almost imperceptibly, in certain red spots which appeared in the skin. They were painless, but gradually increased. Perhaps the man who was the subject of the complaint scarcely knew that he had it at all; but it increased, and further, and further, it spread. The perspiration was unable to find a vent, and the skin became dry, and peeled off in scales The withering of the skin was too true an index of what was going on within; for in the very marrow of the bones there was a most frightful rottenness, which in due time would utterly consume the victim. The man would eat and drink; he would perform, what is called by the physician, the *naturalia;* all the functions would be discharged as if in health. All things would go on as before, and he would be subject to very little pain; but

by degrees the bones would rot, in many cases the fingers would drop off, and yet without any surgical operation the rest of the body was healed, so that there was no bleeding. When it came to its very worst phase, the body would dissolve, all the strings being loosened, and the whole house of manhood would become a horrible mass of animated rubbish rather than the stately temple which God originally made it. I could not in your presence this morning describe all the loathsomeness of an aggravated case of Jewish leprosy; it would be too sickening, if not disgusting. But let me remind you that this, fearful as it seems to be, is a very poor portrait of the loathsomeness of sin. If God could tell, or, rather, if we could bear to hear what God could tell us of the exceeding wickedness and uncleanness of sin, I am sure we should die. God hides from all eyes but his own the blackness of sin. There is no creature, not even an angel before the throne, that ever knew the intolerable wickedness of rebellion against God. Yet that little of it which the Holy Ghost taught you and me when we were under conviction of sin, was enough to make us feel that we wished we had never been born. Ah! well must I confess, though my life was kept and preserved as a child from outward immorality, when I first saw myself as I was by nature, and in the thoughts, and intents, and imaginations of my heart, I thought that even devils in hell could not be baser than myself. Certain I am that, whenever the Spirit of God comes into the soul, our good opinion of ourselves soon vanishes. We thought we were all that heart could wish, but when once taught of God we think that we are vile and full of sin, that there is no good thing whatsoever in us. Loathsome, I say, as was the leper, it is not more so in the type than is sin in the estimation of every enlightened mind.

Think again. The leper was not only loathsome in his person, but was *defiled in all his acts.* If he drank out of a vessel, the vessel was defiled. If he lay upon a bed, the bed became unclean, and whosoever sat upon the bed afterwards became unclean too. If he touched but the wall of a house the wall became unclean, and must be purged. Wherever he went he tainted the atmosphere; his breath was as dangerous as the

pestilence. He shot baneful glances from his eyes. All that he did was full of the same loathsomeness as was himself. Now, this may seem to be a very humiliating truth, but faithfulness requires us to say it, all the actions of the natural man are tainted with sin. Whether he eats, or drinks, or whatsoever he does, he continues to sin against his God. Nay, if he should come up to God's house and sing and pray, there is sin in his songs, for they are but hypocrisy; there is guilt in his prayers, for the prayers of the wicked are an abomination unto the Lord. Let him attempt to perform holy actions, he is like Uzziah who laid hold upon the censer of the priest while the leprosy was on his brow, till he was glad enough to retire from the sacred place, lest he should be struck dead. Oh! when we saw or thought we saw the sinfulness of sin, this was one of the darkest parts of it that we discovered, all our actions to be stained and tainted with evil. I know not whether I have any in this congregation, who are prepared to deny what I assert. If there are, it is my duty solemnly to assure them that they are unclean, and covered with an incurable leprosy. They are hopeless lepers who cannot be cleansed, for no man can be cleansed of sin till he is ready to confess that he is all unholy and unclean. Submission to this truth is absolutely necessary to salvation. I am not to condemn any man, but still I must speak God's word, and speak it in loving faithfulness. If thou dost not confess that all thy actions before thou wast regenerate were full of sin and abominable in the sight of God, thou hast not yet learned what thou art, and it is not likely that thou wilt wish to know what a Saviour is.

Think of the leper yet again. Being thus the medium of contagion and defilement wherever he went, the Lord demanded that he should be *shut out from the society of Israel.* There was a spot outside the camp, barren, solitary, where lepers were confined. They were commanded to wear a covering over the mouth and upon the upper lip, and if any passed by they were compelled to cry, "Unclean! Unclean! Unclean!" a sound which being muffled by reason of the covering which they wore, must have sounded more ghastly and deathlike than any other human cry. Some of the Rabbi translate the cry, "Avoid!

Avoid! Avoid!" One of the American poets has put it, "Room for the leper! room!" But certainly the sense of it is generally understood to be "Unclean!" Living apart from their dearest friends, shut out from all the pleasures of society, they were required never to drink of a running stream of which others might drink; nor might they sit down on any stone by the roadside upon which it was probable any other person might rest. They were to all intents and purposes, dead to all the enjoyments of life, dead to the endearments and society of their friends. Ay, and such is the case with the sinner, with regard to the people of God. Dost not thou feel, poor convicted sinner, that thou art unfit to join Christ's Church? Thou canst go and find such mirth as the company of thy fellow-lepers can afford. But where God's people are, thou art out of place. Thou feelest in thyself that thou art shut out from the communion of saints. Thou canst not pray their prayer nor sing their songs. Thou knowest not their joys. Thou hast never tasted of their perfect peace. Thou hast never entered into the rest which remaineth for them, but which remaineth not for thee whilst thou art such an one as thou art now. This, however, is the fearful part of the leprosy of sin, that many who are shut out from goodness become contented with the exclusion. There may be some who even pretend to despise the privileges which they cannot enjoy. Since they cannot be holy, they make holiness the theme of ridicule. Since they must not enjoy the delights of piety they turn their heel upon them, and say, "That there are no joys in religion, nor bliss in love of Christ." This is perhaps one of the most fearful parts of this leprosy of sin, that it deceives the man himself, makes him think himself to be healthy whilst he is full of disease, makes him imagine the healthy ones to be diseased, whilst he who is the true leper, thinks himself to be the only sane person in the camp.

Once more, the leper was *wholly unable to come up to the house of God.* Other men might offer sacrifices, but not the leper; others had a share in the great High Priest's sacrifice, and when he went within the vail he appeared for all others; but the leper had neither part nor lot in this matter. He was

shut out from God, as well as shut out from man. He was no partaker of the sacred things of Israel, and all the ordinances of the tabernacle were as nothing to him. Think of that, sinner! As one full of guilt, thou art shut out from all communion with God. True, he gives thee the mercies of this life as the leper had his bread and water, but thou hast none of the spiritual joys which God affords to his people. Thou canst not stand in his presence, for he is a devouring fire, and would consume thee. Thy prayers are shut out from him, thy words are unheard. Thou art a prodigal son, and thy father is far from thee. Thou hast spent thy substance in riotous living, and no man will give to thee. Thou hast become the companion of the swine, and thou wouldest fain fill thy belly with the husks which the swine do eat. No father's eye greets thee; at no father's table dost thou sit. The hired servants have bread enough and to spare, but thou dost perish with hunger. Oh, sinner! thou who dost not feel thyself to be what I describe thee wilt one day find it to be a very awful thing to be denied all fellowship with God, for at last thou mayest seek in vain to cross thy father's threshold. After death thou wilt long to enter within the pearly gates, and thou shalt be thrust back, for lepers and defiling ones can never stand in the sanctified presence of the holy God. Where angels veil their faces, lepers shall not exhale their putrid breath. God drove Satan out of Paradise because he sinned, and will he suffer sin a second time to intrude into his presence? No, thou shalt find that as long as thou and thy sins are one, God will always be at war with thee. As long as thou art at peace with thy guilt, God vows eternal warfare with thee.

Now I wish I could more forcibly put the position of a sinner in God's sight this morning. Let me recapitulate. Every man by nature is like a leper; loathsome in his person, infected in all his actions, he is incapable of fellowship with God's people, and he is shut out utterly and entirely by his sin from the presence and acceptance of God.

II. I shall now BRING THE LEPER UP TO THE HIGH PRIEST.

Here he stands; the priest has come out to meet him. Mark, whenever a leper was cleansed under the Jewish law—the leper

did nothing—the priest did all. I invite you to read over this chapter when you are at home, and you will see that previous to his being pronounced clean, the leper was passive—the priest did everything. Well, the priest comes out from the sanctuary to the place of the lepers, where no other man might go but he in his priestly office. He calls up one leper before him; he looks at him, and there is a spot on that leper which is not leprous—quick, raw, healthy flesh; the priest puts him aside, he is an unclean leper. Here is another, and he has but one or two red spots appearing beneath the skin; all the rest of his body is perfectly sound—the priest puts him aside, he is an unclean leper. Here is another; he is from head to foot covered with a scaly whiteness of the filthy disease; the hair is all turned white, owing to the decay of the powers of nature, which are unable now to nourish the roots of the hair. There is not a single speck of health in him from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot, but all is pollution and filth. But hark! the high priest says to him, "Thou art clean." And after certain necessary ceremonies he is admitted into the camp, and afterwards into the very sanctuary of God. My text asserts, that if there was found any sound place in him, he was unclean. But when the leprosy had covered him, wheresoever the priest looked, then the man became by sacrificial rights a clean leper

Now, let me bring up the sinner before the Great High Priest this morning. How many there are, who, as they come up hither, are ready to confess that they have done many things which are wrong, but they say, "Though we have done much which we cannot justify, yet there have been many good actions which might almost counterbalance the sin. Have we not been charitable to the poor? have we not sought to instruct the ignorant; to help those that are out of the way? We have some sins, we do confess; but there is much at the bottom which is still right and good, and we therefore hope that we shall be delivered." I put you aside in God's name, this morning, as unclean lepers. For you there is no hope, and no promise of salvation whatever. Here comes a second. He admits with candor that he has a very great measure of guilt—perhaps not open immorality, but he confesses that his thoughts, and the

imaginations of his heart have been evil, and evil frequently. "But still," saith he, "though I have not one good work of which to boast, nor any righteousness in which to glory, yet I do hope that by repentance I may amend; I trust that by a resolute persistence in good works I may yet blot out my past life, and so may enter into heaven." I set him aside again as being an unclean leper, for whom cleansing rites are not provided. He is one who must still be kept without the camp; he has not arrived at that stage in which it is possible for him to be made clean.

But here comes another. Probably he is a really better man than either of the other two; but not in his own opinion. He stands before us, and, with many a sigh and tear, confesses that he is utterly ruined and undone. "Sir, a month or two ago I would have claimed a righteousness with the very best of them. I, too, could have boasted of what I have done; but now I see my righteousness to be as filthy rags, and all my goodness is as an unclean thing. I count all these things but dross and dung. I tread upon them and despise them I have done no good thing. I have sinned and come short of the glory of God. If ever there was a sinner that deserved to be damned, sir, that soul am I; if ever there was one who had not any excuse to make, but who must plead guilty, without any extenuating circumstances, that man am I. As for the future, I can make no promise; I have often promised, and so often lied. I have so often trusted in myself that I would reform, so often have I hoped the energy of my nature might yet heal my disease, that I renounce, because I cannot help renouncing all such desires. Lord, if ever I am made whole, thy grace must make me so. I do desire to be rid of sin, but I can no more rid myself of sin than I can pluck the sun from the firmament, or scoop the waters from the depth of the sea. I would be perfect, even as thou art perfect; but I cannot change my heart. As well might the viper lose his will to poison, the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots, as I cease to do evil. Lord, at thy feet I fall, full of leprosy from head to foot; nothing have I to boast of, nothing to trust to except thy mercy." My brother, you are a clean leper; your sins are forgiven you, your iniquities are put away. Through the blood of Jesus Christ, who died

upon the tree, you are saved. As soon as ever the leprosy had come right out, the man was clean; and as soon as ever your sin is fully manifest, so that in your conscience you feel yourself to be really a sinner, there is a way of salvation for you. Then by the sprinkling of blood and the washing of water, you may be made clean.

As long as a man has anything to boast of, there is no Christ for him; but the moment he has nothing of his own, Christ is his. Whilst thou art anything, Christ is nothing to thee; but when thou art nothing, Christ is everything. All the warrant that a sinner needs in coming to Christ is to know that he is a sinner. For "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Do I know myself to be a sinner? Then he came to save me; and there I rest and there I trust. If I have any good feelings or good works which take away from me the power to call myself a sinner, or if they diminish the force and emphasis which I put upon the word when I use it, then may I fear that I have no right to come to Christ. Christ died, "the just for the unjust, to bring us to God." Am I unjust? Must I honestly declare I am? "Christ died for the ungodly." Am I ungodly? is this my grief and sorrow that I am ungodly? Then Christ died for me." I do not know, said Martin Luther, when men will ever believe that text in which it is written, *Christ died for our sins.* They *will* think that Christ died for our righteousness, whereas he died for our sins. Christ had no eye to our goodness when he came to save us, but to our badness. A physician, when he comes to my house, has not an eye to my present health; he does not come there because I am healthy, but because I am sick, and the more sick I am, the more call for the physician's skill, and the more argument does my sickness yield why he should exercise all his craft and use his best medicines on my behalf. Your only plea with Christ is your guilt. Use it, sinner, use it as David did when he said, "Lord have mercy upon my iniquity, for it is great!" If he had said, "Have mercy upon my iniquity, for it is little," he would have been a legalist, and would have missed his mark. But when he said, "Have mercy, for it is great!" he understood the gospel riddle, that strange paradox at which Pharisees are offended,

and which worldlings always hate—the glorious fact that Jesus Christ came into the world "not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

III. We shall now briefly turn our attention to THE CEREMONIES WHICH THE PRIEST USED IN THE CLEANSING OF THE LEPER.

I will read the verses, and expound them briefly. "And the priest shall go forth out of the camp; and the priest shall look, and, behold, if the plague of leprosy be healed in the leper, then shall the priest command to take for him that is to be cleansed two birds alive and clean, and cedar wood, and scarlet, and hyssop; and the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel over running water; as for the living bird, he shall take it, and the cedar wood, and the scarlet, and the hyssop, and shall dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water; and he shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living bird loose into the open field." You will perceive, first, that *the priest went to the leper*, not the leper to the priest. We go not up to heaven, first, till Christ comes down from his Father's glory to the place where we as lepers are shut out from God. Oh! glorious High Priest, methinks I see thee this morning coming out from the tabernacle of the Most High, where thou hast offered thy complete sacrifice, and thou comest down to us loathsome and abhorred sinners. Thou dost take upon thyself the form of man. Thou dost not disdain the Virgin's womb; thou comest to sinners; thou eatest and drinkest with them.

But the coming of the priest was not enough, *there must be a sacrifice*, and on this occasion, in order to set out the two ways by which a sinner is saved, there was *sacrifice mingled with resurrection*. First, there was sacrifice. One of the birds was taken, and its blood was shed in a vessel which was full, as the Hebrew hath it, of "living water"—of water which had not been stagnant, but which was clean. Just as when Jesus Christ was put to death, blood and water flowed from his side to be "of sin a double cure," so in the earthen vessel there was received, first, the "living water," and then the blood of the bird which had

just been slain. If sin is put away it must be by blood. There is no way of putting sin from before the presence of God except by the streams which flow from the open veins of Christ. It was nothing that the leper did. You notice he does nothing whatever in the whole affair but stand still and humbly partake of the benefits which are given to him through the mission of the priest, and through the slaughter of the bird. And then the second bird was dipped into the blood until all its feathers were red and dropping with gore. It was doubtless tied round the cedar stick at the end of which was the hyssop to make a kind of brush. The bird's wings were tied along the stick, and the whole was dipped in the blood of the bird that was slain; and when this had been done seven times, the strings were cut, and the living bird allowed to fly away. This is a picture of Christ. As a living bird he ascends on high, after being slain for us—scattering the red drops of atonement, he rises above the clouds, which receive him out of our sight, and there before his Father's throne, he pleads the full merit of the sacrifice which he offered for us once for all.

The leper was made clean by sacrifice and by resurrection, but he was not clean till the blood was sprinkled on him. Christians, the cross does not save us till Christ's blood is sprinkled on our conscience. Yet the virtual salvation was accomplished for all the elect when Christ died for them upon the tree. It is the joy of every Christian to stand here saved by another. He knows that he is full of leprosy, that in himself there is no reason whatever why he should be cleansed, but that the reasons are all the other way, for there is every reason why he should continue to be shut out forever from the presence of God. But there stands the High Priest, the great Melchisedec, the Son of the Virgin, and the Son of God. He has offered his own blood for us. He who offered it, applies it to the conscience. But the saving of your soul rests not with yourself, but with Christ Jesus, just as the cleansing of the leper was not with the leper, but with the priest. How many there are among God's people who say, "I know that Christ died for sinners, but I don't get any comfort from it, because I do not *feel* as if I were saved." That is self-righteousness in a very deceitful shape. You will

not be saved by feeling that Christ died for you, but by his dying for you. If he died for you, you were saved when he died. If he took your sins, he took them in very deed, and they are not yours. If Christ was your substitute at all, then God can never punish two for one offence—first the substitute, and then the sinner himself. If Christ really died for you, then your sins are pardoned, whether you feel that they are pardoned or not. "Yes," says one, "but I want to realize that." It is a very blessed thing to realize it; but it is not the realizing that saves. It is the death of Christ that saves, not your realizing the death. If there be a life boat, and some poor man be ready to drown, and some strong hand rescues him, when he comes to himself he realizes that he is in the boat; but it is not the realizing that he is in the boat that saves him, it is the life boat. So it is Christ that saves the sinner, not the sinner's feelings, or willings, or doings; and in heaven the whole glory of salvation will be to the wounds of Jesus, and nothing else.

"But," says one, "how am I to know that Christ died for me?" You will never know it until you are willing to stand in the leper's place full of leprosy. If you know this day that you are full of sin, if you are conscious that in you, that is, in your flesh, there dwelleth no good thing, then it is written that Christ died for our sins, *according to the Scriptures*—not according to our feelings, but according to the Scriptures. How do I know that I am full of sin? Not merely because I feel it, but because God tells me so. How do I know that Christ died for me? Not because I feel it, but because God tells me so. He says Christ came into the world to save sinners. I am a sinner, I feel it, I know it. God forbid that I should be such a liar to myself as to deny it. *Then he came to save me.* "Come, now, let us reason together. Though your sins be as scarlet"—that is my case—"*they shall be as wool*, though they be red like crimson"—that is my case—"*they shall be as snow.*" It is just this—if you are willing to stand to-day condemned as a sinner, and nothing more than a sinner, then Christ died for you. Your business is to trust your soul on the fact that Christ did hang on the tree for sinners; for mark—faith is trusting Christ, and having done with self. Put your finger on any sound place in your flesh,

you are a lost man. Point to any good thing that you can trust to, and there is no heaven for you. Rely on anything that you have felt, or thought, or said, or done, and you rely on a broken reed; but trust in Christ, and Christ alone; cast your arms around his cross, and cling to that, you are saved; yet it will not be *your clinging*, it will be the cross that will save you. Do not trust to your clinging, trust to the cross. Still to the cross flee away, ye poor, lost, ruined ones, for under its shadow there is safety for the defenceless, there is hope even for the despairing.

IV. Observe, that AFTER THE LEPER WAS CLEANSED, THERE WERE CERTAIN THINGS WHICH HE HAD TO DO.

Yet until he is cleansed, he is to do nothing. The sinner can do nothing towards his own salvation. His place is the place of death. Christ must be his life. The sinner is so lost that Christ must begin, and carry on, and finish all; but when the sinner is saved, then he begins to work in right good earnest. When once he is no more a leper, but a leper cleansed, then for the love he bears his master's name, there is no trial too arduous, no service too hard; but he spends his whole strength in magnifying and glorifying his Lord. I want to call your attention to the further cleansing of the leper. Mark, he was wholly cleansed by the priest, and what was done afterwards, was done by a cleansed man. "He that is to be cleansed shall wash his clothes, and shave off all his hair, and wash himself in water." Blood first, water afterwards. No cleansing from evil habits until there has been cleansing from sin. There is no making the nature clean until the guilt is put away. "He shall wash his clothes, and shave off his hair, and wash himself in water, that he may be clean, and after that he shall come into the camp, and shall tarry abroad out of his tent seven days." He did not tell him to wash first. It would have been of no use to him whatever. He did not tell him to wash his clothes and shave his hair first.

> "No outward forms could make him clean,
> The leprosy laid deep within."

No, the priest must do all the work at first. After that, then the leper must be washed. So sinner, if you are to be saved Christ

must do it all; but when once you have faith in Christ, then you must be washed; then must you cease from sin, and then by the Holy Spirit's power you shall be enabled to do so. What was ineffective before, shall become mighty enough now, through the life which God has put into you. The washing with water by the word, and the cleansing of yourself from dead works, shall become an effectual and mighty duty. You shall be made holy and walk in white, in the purity wherewith Christ hath endowed you. The shaving off of his hair was fitly to represent how all the old things were to pass away, and everything was to become new. All the white hair was to be cut off, as you read in the 9th verse—"He shall shave all the hair off his head, and his beard, and his eyebrows." There was not a remnant or relic left of the old state in which the hair was white; all was to be given up. So it is with the sinner. When he is once pardoned, once cleansed, then he begins to cut off the old habits, his old prides, his old joys. The beard on which the hoary Jew prided himself, was to come off, and the eyebrows which seem to be necessary to make the countenance look decent, were all to be taken away.

So it is with the pardoned man. He did nothing before, he does everything now. He knew that good works were of no benefit to him in his carnal state, but now he becomes so strict that he will shave off every hair of his old state. Not one darling lust shall be left, not one iniquity shall be spared, all must be cut away. "He shall wash his clothes also, he shall wash his flesh in water, and he shall be clean." There is one thing I want you to notice in the eighth verse, namely, that he was not allowed to go into his own tent. He might go in with the people, but he might not go into his "tent." Now though the sinner has to trust in Christ just as he is, yet that sinner will not at once be able to go into his own tent, that is, he will never be able to realize that Christ is personally his own, until there has been something more than faith, namely, the cleansing purification of the Spirit's power. As to full assurance I do not think that is to be attained by immediate faith in Christ; full assurance is an after-result. Faith groweth by the influence of the Spirit till it comes to assurance. Yet mark, though for seven days

the man might not go into his own house, he was clean, and so, if you as a sinner full of sin, trust Christ to be your all, though no joy may follow for seven days, yet you are a pardoned man. Though you may not be able to go into your house and say, "I know I am forgiven," yet you are forgiven. The very hour when sin abounds is the hour when grace abounds. When sin has cut the throat of all your hopes, then Jesus Christ, the great hope and solace of his people, comes into your heart, and though you may scarce be able to see him, yet he is there and you are a saved man. What a glorious salvation is this, and its after-results, how pure and how heavenly!

I will not detain you further than to notice that this man, before he might further enjoy the privileges of his healed estate, was to bring an offering, and the priest was to take him to the very door of the tabernacle. He never dare come there before, but he may come now. So the pardoned man may come right up to God's mercy-seat, and may bring the offering of holiness and good works. He is a pardoned man now. You ask me how? Not by anything *he* did, but by what the *priest* did, and that alone. Read the fourteenth verse, "The priest shall take some of the blood of the trespass offering, and the priest shall put it upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed." Here the Lord puts away the sins of the ear, which are very many. The sin of the ear—when thou used to hear lascivious songs, malignant words, and idle tattle. "He shall put it upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed and upon the thumb of his right hand." Have you read that How many times has the right hand sinned against God! How have your actions defiled you! "He shall put it upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot." How have your feet run after wickedness! How greatly you need to be cleansed!

But mark, when this blood had been put on, the priest did more, for he anointed him. Read the seventeenth verse: "And of the rest of the oil that is in his hand shall the priest put upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his

right foot, upon the blood of the trespass offering." This was telling him again very plainly that which he might have seen already in the type of the two birds. As soon as ever a man is pardoned, there elapses a time before he completely understands the plan of salvation. When he does, he perceives that he is first cleansed with blood, all his sins, of ear, of hand, of foot, or whatever they may be, are all put away by blood But next, that he may become God's servant, he is anointed by the influence of the Holy Spirit with the sanctifying oil. That oil is put on his ear, so that his ear hears his Master's voice, and listens to the Word of God. That oil is put upon his hand that he may be a consecrated man to serve his God. That oil is put upon his foot that his feet may run in the way of God's commands, even to the end. But do mark, for I fear lest I should spoil that which I want to convey. All this was after the leper was cleansed. He could not have done any of this himself until the first part had been done for him.

To sum up the whole sermon in one or two short sentences. Sinner, if thou art this day unrenewed and unregenerate, thou art loathsome to thyself; thou art incapable of fellowship with God; thou art preparing thyself for the pit of hell. But the way of salvation is simply this: If thou art to-day full of sin, laden with iniquity, if thou art ready to confess there is no good thing in thee, if thou art willing to take the place of a prisoner who has been tried, condemned and cast, then Christ has died for thee. Christ has shed the blood, Christ has risen up on high, and thy salvation is finished. Say not in thy heart, "I do not *feel this*, I do not *feel that*." It is not thy feeling or doing; it is what Christ has done. He must do all for thee; and all he asks of thee is simply to stand in the place of the unjust that he may come to thee in the place of the just, while he stands in thy room and stead. Is this too easy for you? Are you too proud to be saved by such a system as this? Then, what can I say to you, but that you deserve to die if you neglect a plan of salvation so simple and so admirably adapted to your case? But instead thereof, if you say, "That suits me, for I have nothing to trust to, I am lost," why, man, do you not see that inasmuch as it suits you, it is yours? For whom

was the wedding garment made—for those who had fine robes of their own? No—for the naked. For whom was the bath open? for the clean? No—for the filthy. Step in, filthy man, thy filth is thy warrant. For whom is medicine provided? for the healthy? No, it were an insult. For the sick. Thy sickness is thy warrant; come to Mercy's hospital and be thou healed.

Whom dost thou think Christ came to carry on his shoulders to heaven? Those that can walk there themselves? No, let them trudge their weary way: if they think they can go to heaven with their good works, let them do so. One of two things, either you must be saved without deserving to be saved —saved by the works of another—or else you must keep the whole law, and so inherit heaven of your own right and patent. If, then, you are willing to come to Christ, just as you are without any preparation, but just simply as a sinner, then Christ has made atonement for you; your guilt is put away; God accepts you: you are a pardoned man. You may go out at yonder door and say in your heart, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. And not only so, but we also join in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we now have received the atonement." As for holiness and good works, these shall come afterwards. Having believed in Christ, his Spirit shall be given, and you shall be zealous for good works. While the legalist is talking about them, you shall do them. What you could not do before, you shall do now. When you have given up all trust in yourself, you shall become holy and pure; and the Spirit of God shall enter into you, and shall renew you. You shall be kept by the power of God till, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, you shall be presented before your Father's face saved—saved eternally.

God add his blessing! I have sought to preach to you the gospel as plainly as possible. I may still have been misunderstood. If so, I trust that is not my fault. I have repeated over and over again, that the sinner, near despairing, may now come and put his trust in Christ, and find life in Jesus' death, and healing in Jesus' wounds. AMEN.

SERMON XX.

THE WAILING OF RISCA.

[Sometime the last of November, 1860, the beautiful valley of Risca, in South Wales, was visited by a terrible calamity. By an explosion in one of the mines, a large number of lives were lost, and the whole valley thrown into consternation and grief. Here Spurgeon had been accustomed to spend a few days occasionally for rest and relaxation. The present discourse, preached in Exeter Hall, London, Dec. 9, 1860, commemorates the sad event, and he afterwards refers to it as a sermon specially blessed of God to souls.]

"Suddenly are my tents spoiled, and my curtains in a moment."
Jeremiah, iv. 20.

The sorrow of the weeping prophet was exceeding heavy when he uttered these words of lamentation. A great and present burden from the Lord is weighing so heavily upon our hearts this morning, that we cannot spare so much as a moment for sympathy with the griefs of past ages. God has visited our land, and his strokes have been exceeding hard. We are constrained to take up a wailing, and cry aloud, "Suddenly are my tents spoiled, and my curtains in a moment." There is a spot in South Wales which has frequently yielded me a quiet and delightful retreat. Beautiful for situation, surrounded by lofty mountains, pierced by romantic valleys, the breathing of its air refreshes the body, and the sight of the eyes makes glad the heart. I have climbed its hills, I have seen the ever-widening

landscape, the mountains of Wales, the plains of England, and the seas sparkling afar. I have descended the hills and marked the mist creeping up the side of the hills and covering the woods with clouds. I have mingled with its pious men and women, and worshipped God in their assemblies. These lips have ministered the Word in that once happy valley. I have been fired with the devotion of the people when they have listened to the Word. Well do I remember one night, when, crowded together in the place of worship, hearty Welsh miners responded to every word of Christ's minister, with their "gogoniants," encouraging me to preach the gospel, and crying "Glory to God," while the message was proclaimed. I remember how they constrained me, and kept me well nigh till midnight, preaching three sermons, one after another, almost without rest, for they loved to listen to the gospel. God was present with us, and many a time has the baptismal pool been stirred since then by the fruit of that night's labor.

Nor shall I ever forget, when standing in the open air beneath God's blue sky, I addressed a vast gathering within a short distance of that spot; when the Spirit of God was poured upon us, and men and women were swayed to and fro under the heavenly message, as the corn is moved by the summer winds. Great was our joy that day, when the people met together in thousands, and with songs and praises separated to their homes, talking of what they had heard. But now our visitation of that neighborhood must ever be mingled with sorrow. How hath God been pleased to smite down strong men, and to take away the young men upon a sudden! "How suddenly are my tents spoiled, and my curtains in a moment." Oh! vale of Risca, I take up a lamentation for thee: the Lord hath dealt sorely with thee. Behold, and see if there be sorrow in any valley like unto thy sorrow which is done unto thee. The angel of death has emptied out his quiver upon thee; the awful reaper hath gathered to himself full sheaves from thy beautiful valley.

You all know the story; it scarce needs that I should tell it to you. Last Saturday week, some two hundred or more miners descended in health and strength to their usual work in the bowels of the earth. They had not been working long, their

wives and their children had risen, and their little ones had gone to their schools, when suddenly there was heard a noise at the mouth of the pit—it was an explosion: all knew what it meant. Men's hearts failed them, for well they prophecied the horror which would soon reveal itself. They wait awhile; the foul gas must first be scattered; brave men with their lives in their hands descend into the pit, and when they are able to see with the dim miner's lamp, the light falls upon corpse after corpse. A few, a handful, are brought up alive, and scarce alive; but yet, thank God, with enough of the vital spark remaining to be again kindled to a flame; but the great mass of those strong men have yielded to death. Some of them were brought up with their faces burned and scarred, their bodies disfigured by the fire; but many are discovered whose faces looked as if they sweetly slept, so that it was scarcely possible to believe that they really could be dead, so quietly had the spirit quitted the habitation of clay. Can you picture to yourselves the scene? The great fires lit around the pit, flaming both night and day; the thick mist, the pouring rain drenching the whole of the valley. Do you see the women as they come clustering round the pit, shrieking for their sons, and their husbands, and their fathers? Do you hear that scream as yonder woman has just discovered the partner of her life? and there, do you mark another bending over the forms of her two stalwart sons, now, alas! taken from her forever? Do you mark the misery that sits upon the face of some who have not found their sons, their fathers, their husbands, or their brothers, and who know not where they are? The misery in that valley is past description; those who have witnessed it, fail to be able to picture it. As the cry of Egypt in the night when the destroying angel went through all the land and smote the first-born; as the wail of Rachel when she could not be comforted for her children, because they were not: such has been the weeping, the lamentation of that fair but desolate valley.

My friends, this judgment has a voice to us, and the scarce buried bodies of those men which lie around us in vision, have each a sorrowful lesson. The cry of the widow, and of the childless mother, shall come up into our ears to-day; and O

Lord God of Sabaoth, may it so arouse us that we may hear, and fear, and tremble, and turn unto thee—that this dread calamity may be to us the means of our salvation, or if saved, the means of stirring us up more earnestly to seek the salvation of our fellow-men.

There are three points upon which I shall try to address you this morning, though I feel inadequate to such a task. First, I shall say somewhat upon *sudden bereavements;* then I shall dwell awhile upon the fact of *sudden death;* and afterwards will say but a little, for we know but little of the *sudden exchange* which sudden death shall bring both to saints and sinners.

I. Our first theme is SUDDEN BEREAVEMENTS.

Alas! alas! how soon may we be childless; how soon may we be widowed of the dearest objects of our affections! O Lord, thou hast shown to us this day how soon thou canst blast our gourds and wither all the fruits of our vineyard. The dearest ones, the partners of our blood, how soon can death proclaim a divorce between us—our children, the offspring of our loins, how soon canst thou lay them beneath the sod! We have not a single relative who may not become to us within the next moment, a fountain of grief. All that are dear and precious to us are only here by God's good pleasure. What should we be to-day, if it were not for those whom we love, and who love us? What were our house without its little prattlers? What were our habitation without the wife of our bosom? What were our daily business without our associates and friends to cheer us in our trials? Ah! this were a sad world, indeed, if the ties of kindred, of affection, and of friendship all be snapped; and yet it is such a world that they must be sundered, and may be divided at any moment.

From the fact that sudden bereavements are possible—not only to miners and to women whose husbands are upon the sea, but *to us also*—I would that we would learn profitable lessons. And first let us *learn to hold loosely our dearest friends.* Let us love them—love them we may, love them we should—but let us always learn to love them as dying things. Oh, build not thy nest on any of these trees, for they are all marked for the

axe. "Set not thine affections on things on earth," for the things of earth *must* leave thee, and then what wilt thou do when thy joy is emptied, and the golden bowl which held thy mirth shall be dashed in pieces? Love first and foremost Christ; and when thou lovest others, still love them not as though they were immortal. Love not clay as though it were undying—love not dust as though it were eternal. So hold thy friend that thou shalt not wonder when he vanishes from thee; so view the partakers of thy life that thou wilt not be amazed when they glide into the land of spirits. See thou the disease of mortality on every cheek, and write not *Eternal* upon the creature of an hour.

Take care that thou puttest all thy dear ones into God's hand. Thou hast put thy soul there, put them there. Thou canst trust him for temporals for thyself, trust thy jewels with him. Feel that they are not thine own, but that they are God's loans to thee; loans which may be recalled at any moment—precious benisons of heaven, not entailed upon thee, but of which thou art but a tenant at will. Your possessions are never so safe as when you are willing to resign them, and you are never so rich as when you put all you have into the hand of God. You shall find it greatly mitigate the sorrow of bereavements, if before bereavement you shall have learned to surrender every day all the things that are dearest to you into the keeping of your gracious God.

Further, you who are blessed with wife and children, and friends, take care that you bless God for them. Sing a song of praise to him who hath blessed you so much more than others. You are not a widow, but there are many that wear the weeds, and why is it not your lot? You are not bereaven of your spouse, but there is many a man whose heart is rent by such a calamity,—why is it not your portion too? You have not to follow to-morrow your little ones to their narrow graves—early flowers that did but bud and never ripened, withering, alas! too soon. Oh! by the sorrow which you would feel if they were taken away, I exhort you to bless God for them while you have them. Oh! be not ungrateful, lest thou provoke the Lord to smite the mercy which thou dost not value. Sing unto the

Lord, sing unto his name. Give unto him the praise which he deserves for his sparing favors which he has manifested towards you in your household.

And then permit me to remind you that if these sudden bereavements may come, and there may be a dark chamber in any house in a moment, and the coffin may be in any one of our habitations, let us so act to our kinsfolk and relatives as though we knew they were soon about to die. Young man, so treat thy hoary father as thou wouldst behave to him if thou knewest he would die to-morrow. When thou shalt follow him to the grave, amidst all thy tears for his loss, let there not be one tear of repentance because of thine illbehavior to him. And you, godly fathers and mothers, to you I have a special message—your children are committed to your care; they are growing up, and what if after they be grown up they should plunge into sin and die at last impenitent! Let not the fierce regret sting you like an adder,—"Oh that I had prayed for my children! Oh that I had taught them before they departed." I pray you so live, that when you stand over your child's dead body you may never hear a voice coming up from that clay, "Father, thy negligence was my destruction. Mother, thy want of prayer was the instrument of my damnation." But so live that when you hear the funeral knell, for a neighbor even, you may be able to say, "Poor soul, whether he is gone to heaven or to hell, I know I am clear of his blood." And with double earnestness be it so with your children. "Yes," says one, "but I have thought of teaching my children more of Christ, and being more earnest in prayer for them bye-and-bye," but what if they should die to-morrow? "Yes," says the wife, "I have thought of speaking to my ungodly husband, and trying to induce him to attend the house of God with me, but I was afraid he would only laugh at me, so I put it off for a month or two." Ah! what if he dies before you have cleared your conscience of him? Oh, my brothers and sisters in Christ, if sinners will be damned, at least let them leap to hell over our bodies; and if they will perish, let them perish with our arms about their knees, imploring them to stay, and not madly to destroy themselves. If hell must be filled, at least let it be filled in the teeth

of our exertions, and let not one go there unwarned and unprayed for.

In the light, then, of sudden bereavements, let not another hour pass over your head, when you have reached home, before you have freed your conscience of the blood of your children's souls. Gather them together around you this afternoon, and say to them, "My dear children, I have learned to-day that you may die; I knew it before, but I have had it impressed upon my mind by a solemn incident. My dear children, I cannot help telling you, that as you must die, I am anxious that God's Holy Spirit should graciously lead you to repent of sin and seek a Saviour." And then, when you have told them the way to salvation in simple terms, put your arms about their necks, and bid the little ones kneel down, and pray, "O God! upon their infant hearts, stamp thou thine image. As they are in the image of the earthly, so make them in the image of the heavenly, that at the last I may be able to say, 'Here am I, and the children thou hast given me.'"

II. The second head of my discourse is SUDDEN DEATH, AS WE VIEW IT MORE PARTICULARLY IN RELATION TO OURSELVES.

The miners of Risca had no more idea of dying that Saturday morning than you or I have, nor did there seem much likelihood that they would. They had gone up and down the pit, some of them, many thousands of times in their lives. It is true that some had perished there, but then, how very many had gone up and down and had not perished. Nay, they had grown so fearless of danger, that some of them even thrust themselves into it, and in defiance of every regulation for the preservation of human life, they were bold and careless, and would gratify a selfish indulgence when a spark might have caused the destruction of them all. We will not say that it was any negligence that caused this accident—God forbid that we should lay anything to the charge of those who have now departed, and have to answer before their God—but, at any rate, sure it is that men who have most to do with danger are generally the most callous, and those who are most exposed are usually utterly careless about the very danger which others see, but which they will not see

themselves. Any warning you or I might have given them would have been thought unnecessary, if not impertinent. "Why need I be so careful? I have done this fifty times before. Why may I not no it again?" But as in a moment, although there was no lightning-flash, no earthquake, no opening of a pit to swallow them up, quick, in a moment the gas explodes, and they stand before the Eternal God. It was but the twinkling of an eye, even as though the last trump had sounded, and down fell the lifeless form, and the spirit returned to God who made it.

You and I are in danger too. We are not in the pit in the midst of explosive air, but there are a thousand gates to death. How many there be who have fallen dead in the streets? How many sitting in their own homes? I stayed but a week or two ago with an excellent Christian man, who was then in sound health. I was startled indeed when I heard immediately after that he had come home, and sitting down in his chair had shut his eyes and died. These things are usual, and in such a city as ours we cannot go down a street without hearing of some such visitation. Well, our turn must come. Perhaps we shall die falling asleep in our beds after long sickness, but probably we shall be suddenly called in such an hour as we think not to face the realities of eternity. Well, if it be so, if there be a thousand gates to death, if all means and any means may be sufficient to stop the current of our life, if really, after all, spiders' webs and bubbles are more substantial things than human existence, if we are but a vapor, that soon expires, what then? Why, first, I say, let us all look upon ourselves as dying men, let us not reckon on to-morrow. Oh! let us not procrastinate, for taken in Satan's net of procrastination we will wait, and wait, till time is gone and the knell of eternity shall toll our dissolution. To-day is your only time. O mortal men, the present moment is the only moment you may call your own, and oh! how swift its wings! This hour is yours; yesterday is gone; to-morrow is with God, and may never come. "To-day if ye will hear his voice harden not your hearts." Many have had their first impressions from thoughts of death, and hence it is that Satan never likes to let a man think of the grave.

I know a family in which the governess, the daughter of a

Christian minister, was told upon her entering her office, that she was never to mention the subject of death to the children They were never to know even that children might die. I did not marvel when I knew the infidelity of the head of the household. What better atmosphere for an infidel to breathe in, than where the blast of death is never felt? Infidels ought to be immortal. They ought to live in a world where they can never die, for their infidelity will never be able to pass the stream of Jordan. There are infidels on earth, but there are none in heaven, and there can be none in hell. They are all convinced —convinced by terrible facts—convinced that there is a God while they are crushed beneath his vengeance, and made to tremble at his eternal power. But I pray you, sirs, be not such fools as to live as though your bones were iron and your ribs were brass. Let us not be such madmen as to run as though there were no bounds to our race; let us not play away our precious days as though days were common as sands on a sea shore. That hour-glass yonder contains all the sands of your life. Do you see them running? How swiftly do they empty out! With some of you, the most of the sands are in the bottom bulb of the glass, and there are only a few to go trickling through the narrow passway of its days. Ah! and that glass shall never be turned again; it shall never run a second time for you. Let it once run out and you will die. Oh! live as though you meant to die. Live as though you knew you might die tomorrow. Think as though you might die now, and act this very hour as though I could utter the mandate of death, and summon you to pass through the portals of the tomb.

And then take care, I pray you, that you who know Christ not only live as though you meant to die, but live while you live. Oh, what a work we have to do, and how short the time to do it in! Millions of men unconverted yet, and nothing but our feeble voice with which to preach the word! My soul, shalt thou ever condemn thyself in thy dying moments for having preached too often or too earnestly? No, never. Thou mayest rebuke thy sloth, but thou canst never bemoan thy excessive industry. Minister of Christ! in thy dying hour it will never be a theme of reproach to you that you preached ten times in a

week, that you stood up every day to preach Christ, and that you so preached that you spent yourself, and wasted your body with weakness. No, it will be our dull sermons that will haunt us on our dying beds, our tearless preaching, our long studyings, when we might have preached better had we come away and preached without them; our huntings after popularity, by gathering together fine words instead of saying to the people, "Men and women, you are dying, escape for your life, and fly to Christ;" preaching to them in ret-hot, simple words the wrath to come, and the love of Christ.

Oh! there are some of you members of our churches, who are living, but what are you living for? Surely you are not living to get money—that is the worldling's object. Are you living merely to please yourselves? Why, that is but the beast's delight. How few there are of the members of our churches, who really live for God with all their might. Do we give to God as much as we give to our own pleasures? Do we give Christ's service as much time as we give to many of our trifling amusements? Why, we have professional men of education, men of excellent training and ability, who, when they once get into a church, feel that they could be very active anywhere else, but as Christians they have nothing to do. They can be energetic in parish vestries, or in the rifle corps, but in the church they give their name, but their energies are dormant. Ah! my dear hearers, you who love the Saviour, when we shall come before Christ in heaven, if there can be a regret, it will be that we did not do more for Christ while we were here. I think, as we fall down before his feet and worship him, if we could know a sorrow, it would be because we did not bring him in more jewels for his crown—did not seek more to feed the hungry, or to clothe the naked—did not give more to his cause and did not labor more that the lost sheep of the house of Israel might be restored. Live while you live, while it is called to-day; work, for the night cometh wherein no man can work.

And let us learn never to do anything which we would not wish to be found doing if we were to die. We are sometimes asked by young people whether they may go to the theatre, whether they may dance, or whether they may do this or that.

You may do anything which you would not be ashamed to be doing when Christ shall come. You may do anything which you would not blush to be found doing if the hand of death should smite you; but if you would dread to die in any spot, go not there; if you would not wish to enter the presence of your God with such-and-such a word upon your lip, utter not that word —or if there would be a thought that would be uncongenial to the judgment-day, seek not to think that thought. So act that you may feel you can take your shroud with you wherever you went. Happy is he that dies in his pulpit. Blessed is the man that dies in his daily business, for he is found with his loins girt about him serving his Master; but, oh, unhappy must he be to whom death comes as an intruder, and finds him engaged in that which he will blush to have ever touched, when God shall appear in judgment. Power supreme—thou everlasting King! permit not death to intrude upon an ill-spent hour, but find me wrapt in meditation high; hymning my great Creator; proclaiming the love of Jesus; or lifting up my heart in prayer for myself and my fellow-sinners. Let me but serve my God, and then, Death, I will not say to thee when thou mayest come—come when thou wilt; but if I might choose, come to me while I am yearning after souls; come to me when the cry of inviting love is on my lip, and when I am weeping over the souls of men. Come to me, then, that men may say,

> "He did his body with his charge lay down,
> He ceased at once to work and live."

But I may talk thus about sudden death, and the likelihood of it, but ah! sirs, I cannot stir your hearts, for I cannot stir my own as I would. The fact that so many die each day has very little force in it for us, because it is so trite an event, we have heard of it so many times. We look down the catalogue of deaths, and take the average, and we say, "Fifty below the average, or a hundred above the average," but *our* dying never comes home to us. All men will persist in thinking all men mortal but themselves. If there were a great Hydra in the city of London, which every day ate ten of the inhabitants alive, we should be dreadfully miserable, especially if we never knew when it

would be our turn. If we were certain that it would eat all in London bye-and-by, but would only eat ten in a week, we should all tremble as we passed by the huge monster's den, and say—"When will it be my time?" and that would cast a cloud over the whole metropolis, blacker than its usual fog. But here is a monster, Death, which devours its hundreds at its meal; and with iron tongue the funeral knell keeps crying out for more; its greedy and insatiable maw never being filled; its teeth never being blunted; its ravenous hunger never being stayed. And here we are, and though it will be our turn bye-and-by to be devoured, how little do we think about it! One reason, I think, is because we so seldom visit the dying.

I stood once by the side of a poor boy, whom I had taught as a Sunday-school teacher; he had received very little good training at home, and though he was but a lad of seventeen, he became a drunkard and drank himself to death at one debauch. I saw him, and talked to him, and tried to point him to the Saviour, and heard at last the death-throttle in his throat, and as I went down stairs I thought every body a fool for doing anything except preparing to die. I began to look upon the men who drove the carts in the streets, the men who were busy at their shops, and those who were selling their wares, as being all foolish for doing anything except their eternal business, and myself most of all foolish for not pointing dying sinners to a living Christ, and inviting them to trust in his precious blood. And yet, in an hour all things took their usual shape, and I began to think that I was not dying after all, and I could go away and be, I fear, as heartless as before. Then it seemed that men were, after all, wise in thinking of this world, and not the next; I mean not that I really thought so, but I fear I acted as if I thought so; the impression of the dying bed was so soon obliterated. If you could see all die who die, perhaps the impression would be different.

I would liken the sons of men to a company of South Sea Islanders, whose canoe being disabled, floated upon a raft, and were attacked by sharks; they disappeared one by one, till but three or four were left. Can you conceive the despair which would settle upon the countenances of these few? If they knew

a God, do you not think they would then indeed call on him? And in what respect, except that death was more apparent to them, were they different from us? Man after man is being taken away from us by the devouring monster. Friends and kinsfolk have been snatched into the deep, and some of us remain upon the edge of the raft. Yon gray-haired man may be the next that is carried away. The hosts of God are crossing the flood; some have already passed it and are singing the eternal song, and

> "We are to the margin come,
> And soon expect to die."

God help us so to live in the expectation of death, that Christ may be glorified in us whether we sleep or wake, and that we may be able to say, "For me to live is Christ, to die is gain."

III. I now come to the third theme, which is, THAT SUDDEN EXCHANGE WHICH A SUDDEN DEATH WILL CAUSE.

You see yonder Christian man, he is full of fears, he is afraid even of his interest in Christ, he is troubled spiritually, and vexed with temporal cares. You see him cast down and troubled, his faith but very weak; he steps outside yon door, and there meets him a messenger from God, who smites him to the heart, and he is dead. Can you conceive the change? Death has cured him of his fears, his tears are wiped away, once for all, from his eyes; and, to his surprise, he stands where he feared he should never be, in the midst of the redeemed of God, in the general assembly and church of the first-born. If he should think of such things, would he not upbraid himself for thinking so much of his trials and of his troubles, and for looking into a future which he was never to see? See yonder man, he can scarcely walk, he has a hundred pains in his body, he says he is more tried and pained than any man. Death puts his skeleton hand upon him, and he dies. How marvellous the change! No aches now, no casting down of spirit, he then is supremely blest, the decrepid has become perfect, the weak has become strong, the trembling one has become a David, and David has become as the angel of the Lord. Hark to the song which pours from the

lips of him who just now groaned; look at the celestial smile which lights the features of the man just now racked with pain and tormented with anguish! Was ever change so surprising, so marvellous?

When I think of it, I could almost long for it to come across myself this morning; to go from the thousand eyes of you that look upon me, to look into the eyes of Christ, and to go from your songs to the songs of spirits before the throne, to leave the Sabbath work on earth for an eternal Sabbath of rest; to go from unbelieving hearts, from Christians who need to be cheered and sinners that need to be convinced, to be with those who need no preaching, but who in one eternal song sing "Hallelujah to God and the Lamb." I can imagine that when a man dies thus suddenly, one of the first emotions he experiences in the next world will be *surprise.* I can conceive that the spirit knows not where it is. It is like a man waking up from a dream. He looks about him. Oh, that glory! how resplendent yon throne! He listens to harps of gold, and he can scarce believe it true. "I, the chief of sinners, and yet in heaven! I, a doubting one, and yet in paradise!" And then, when he is conscious that he is really in heaven, oh! what *overwhelming joy.* How is the spirit flooded with delight, covered over with it, scarcely able to enjoy it because it seems to be all but crushed beneath the eternal weight of glory! And next, when the spirit has power to recover itself, and open its eyes from the blindness caused by this dazzling light, and to think—when its thoughts have recovered themselves from the sudden effect of a tremendous flood of bliss—the next emotion will be *gratitude.*

See how that believer, five minutes ago a mourner, now takes his crown from off his head, and with transporting joy and gratitude bows before his Saviour's throne. Hear how he sings; was ever song like that, the first song he ever sang that had the fulness of paradise in it—"Unto him that loved me and washed me from my sins in his blood, unto him be glory." And how he repeats it, and looks round to cherubim and seraphim, and prays them to assist him till all the harps of heaven, retaught the melody of gratitude, retuned by the one faithful heart, send up another hallelujah, and yet another; while the floods of harmony surround the eternal throne of God.

But what must be the change to the unconverted man? His joys are over forever. His death is the death of his happiness —his funeral is the funeral of his mirth. He has just risen from his cups; but there is another cup to drain, which is full of bitterness. He has just listened to the sound of the harp and the viol, and the music of them that make merry; an eternal dirge greets his ears, mixed with the doleful chorus of the shrieks of damned souls. What horror and surprise shall seize upon him! "Good God," he says, "I thought it was not so, but lo, it is. What the minister said to me is true; the things I would not believe are at last really so. When the poor soul shall find itself in the hands of angry fiends, and lifts up his eyes in hell, being in torments, what will be his surprise! "And am I," he will say, "really here? I was in the streets of London but a minute ago; I was singing a song but an instant before, and here am I in hell! What! so soon damned? Is the sentence of God like a lightning flash? Does it so instantaneously rive the spirit and destroy its joys?" And when the soul has convinced itself that it is actually in hell, can you imagine next the overwhelming horror that will roll over it? It, too, will be stunned with a mighty flood, not of glory, but of anger, of wrath, of divine justice. Oh! how the spirit is tormented now—tormented beyond thought. And then at last, when the wave recedes a moment, and there is a pause, what black despair shall then seize upon the spirit!

Have you ever seen men die without a hope? I read but yesterday the case of a young woman who had procrastinated many times, and at last was told by the physician that within nine hours he really believed she would be a corpse. Then, when death really became a matter of fact to her, she rose up in the bed upon which she had been laid by the sudden stroke of God, and prayed—prayed till she fell back fainting, and her lips were livid and her cheek was pale, while she cried, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Friends talked to her, consoled and comforted her, and bade her trust in Christ; but she said, "It is of no use for you to comfort me; no, it is too late. I made a fatal resolve some months ago that I would again enjoy the world, and that resolve has destroyed my soul." And then she rose up in bed again, with eyes starting from their sockets, and

prayed again till she was breathless, and groaned and cried, and fell down again in a faint, needing to be restored once more. And so she did, till with a ghastly look—an awful look of horror—as though she felt the anguish of another world, she expired.

Now if such is the remorse of a spirit before it feels the wrath of God—if the first drops are sufficient thus to destroy all hope and beat in pieces all our boastings, what will the eternal hail be—what will the everlasting sleet of divine wrath be when once it is poured out? Sodom and Gomorrah! Why all their fiery hail from heaven shall be nothing compared with the eternal fire that must fall upon the sinner. Do you think I love to speak on such a theme as this? My soul trembles while I think of it. No, I would sooner preach of other things by far, but it is needful that men may be awakened. Oh! I implore you, men and brethren, ye that know not God, and are still condemned, because you believe not in Christ, I pray you think of these things. Oh that I had a Baxter's heart, that I could weep over sinners as he did. Oh that you would be saved! My eyes ache; my brow is full of fire now, because I cannot preach as I wanted to preach to you Oh that God would take up the work and send that truth right home. I know I shall soon die and you too, and I shall face each of you, and your eyes shall stare on me forever and ever, if you be lost through my unfaithfulness. And shall it be—shall it be? Oh that we had a hope that all of us might see the face of God and live! "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved."

Spirit of God, convince of sin, and bring the heart to Christ, and may we all without exception see thy face in joy and glory, and praise thee, world without end. AMEN.

SERMON XXI.

COME AND WELCOME.

[This Sermon, preached at the Music Hall, Royal Surrey Gardens, Oct. 15, 1859, must have been exceedingly precious to "willing sinners." The author says it was "greatly blessed;" and this we can well understand—indeed, we scarcely see how it could fail to be. It is the very simplicity and fulness of the gospel, inviting lost sinners to a willing Saviour. The structure of the discourse is excellent—its divisions natural—its illustrations admirable—its tone devout—its effect most gracious.]

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."—Revelations, xxii. 17.

The cry of the Christian religion is the simple word, "Come." The Jewish law said, "Go, and take heed unto thy steps as to the path in which thou shalt walk. Go, and break the commandments, and thou shalt perish; go, and keep them, and thou shalt live." The law was a dispensation of the whip, which drove men before it; the gospel is just the opposite. It is the Shepherd's dispensation. He goeth before his sheep, and bids them follow him, saying unto them, "Come." The law repels; the gospel attracts. The law shows the distance between God and man: the gospel bridges that distance, and brings the sinner across that great gulf which Moses could never cross. The fact is, as you will all have to learn, if you know anything of gracious

experience, that from the first moment of your spiritual life until you are ushered into glory, the cry of Christ to you will be, "*Come, come* unto me." He will always be ahead of you bidding you follow him as the soldier follows his leader. He will always go before you to pave your way, and prepare your path, and will bid you come after him all through life, and in the solemn hour of death, when you shall lie panting upon your bed, his sweet word, with which he shall usher you into the heavenly world, shall be—"*Come*, come unto me. Stretch thy wings and fly straight to this world of joy, where I am dwelling. Come and be with me where I am."

Nay further than this, this is not only Christ's cry to you; but if you are a believer, this is your cry to Christ—"Come, come!" You will be longing for his second advent; you will be saying, "Come quickly, even so come, Lord Jesus." And you will be always panting for nearer and closer communion with him. As his voice to you is "Come," even so will be your prayer to him, "Come, Lord, and abide in my house. Come, and consecrate me more fully to thy service; come, and without a rival reign; come, occupy alone the throne of my heart."

"Come," then, is the very motto-word of the gospel. I hope to expand that word, this morning, to beat out the golden grain into goldleaf, and may God the Holy Spirit speak this day with his minister, and some who have never come to Jesus before, now come for the first time.

Let us go at once to our text—"Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." There are four things very plainly deduced from our text, namely, that first, *there is a "water of life;"* that secondly, *the invitation is very wide*—"*Whosoever will;*" that thirdly, *the path is clear*, for it says, "*Whosoever will, let him come;*" and that, fourthly, *the only rule that is prescribed is—let him take it "freely."*

I. First, then, remember I am about to preach a very simple sermon this morning, dealing with simple souls. I am longing to see sinners brought to Christ; my heart yearns after the multitude of men who see no beauty in him that they should desire him. God has saved many in this place; may he be pleased

this morning to bring some wanderer to the Father's house, through the merit of the Son, by the Spirit's influence. Well, then, THERE IS A "WATER OF LIFE." Man is utterly ruined and undone. He is lost in a wild, waste wilderness. The heavens refuse him rain, and the earth can yield him no moisture. Must he perish? He looks aloft, beneath, around, and he discovers no means of escape. Must he die? Must thirst devour him? Must he fall upon the desert and leave his bones to bleach under the hot sun? No; for the text declares there is a fountain of life. Ordained in eternity by God in solemn covenant, this fountain, this divine well takes its spring from the deep foundations of God's decrees. It gusheth up from the depth which coucheth beneath; it cometh from that place which the eagle's eye hath not seen, and which the lion's whelp hath not trod.

The deep foundations of God's government, the depths of his own essential goodness and of his divine nature—these are the mysterious springs from which gush forth that fountain of the "water of life" which shall do good to man. The Son hath digged this well and bored through massive rocks which prevented this living water from springing upward. Using his cross as the grand instrument, he has pierced through; he has himself descended to the lowest depth; he hath broken a passage, by which the love and grace of God, the living water which can save the soul, may well up and overflow, to quench the thirst of dying men. The Son hath bidden this fountain freely flow, hath removed the stone which laid upon the mouth thereof, and now having ascended up on high, he standeth there to see that the fountain shall never stay its life-giving course, that its floods shall never be dry, that its depths shall never be exhausted. This sacred fountain, established according to God's good will and pleasure in the covenant, opened by Christ when he died upon the cross, floweth this day to give life and health, and joy and peace to poor sinners dead in sin, and ruined by the fall. There is a "water of life."

Let us pause awhile and look at its floods as they come gushing upwards, overflowing on every side, and assuaging men's thirst. Let us look with joyous eye. It is called the "water of life," and richly doth it deserve its name. God's favor is life,

and in his presence there is pleasure for evermore; but this water is God's favor, and consequently life. By this water of life is intended God's free grace, God's love for men, so that if you come and drink, you shall find this to be life indeed to your soul, for in drinking of God's grace, you inherit God's love, you are reconciled to God, God stands in a fatherly relation to you, and his infinite love yearns towards you.

Again, it is living water not simply because it is love, and that is life, but it saves from impending death. The sinner knows that he must die. He has committed sins so that God must punish him. God must cease to be just if he does not punish the sins of man. Man, when conscious that he has been very guilty, stands trembling in the presence of his Maker, feeling in his soul that his doom is sealed, and that he must certainly be cast away from all hope, and life, and joy. Come hither, then, ye sin-doomed; this water can wash away your sins, and when your sins are washed away, then shall ye live; for the innocent must not be punished. Here is water that can make you whiter than snow. What though you be black as Kedar's smoky tents, here is water that can purge you, and wash you to the whiteness of perfection, and make you fair as the curtains of King Solomon. These waters well deserve the name of life, since pardon is a condition of life. Unpardoned we die, we perish, we sink into the depths of hell; pardoned we live, we rise, we ascend to the very heights of heaven. See here, then, this ever-gushing fountain will give to all who take thereof life from the dead, by the pardon of their sins.

"But," saith the poor convicted soul, "this is not all I want, for if all the sins I have ever committed were blotted out, in ten minutes I should commit many more. If I were now completely pardoned, it would not be many seconds before I should destroy my soul and sink helplessly again." Ay! but see here, this is living water, it can quench thy thirst of sin; entering into thy soul, it shall overcome and cover with its floods thy propensities to evil. It shall cover them first, it shall afterwards drown them, and at last, it shall utterly carry them away. Oh, sinners! this fountain of gospel grace can so wash your hearts that you shall no longer love sin, yea, so perfectly can this water re-

fine the soul, that it shall one day make you as spotless as the angels who stand before the throne of God, and you too, like them, shall obey his behests, hearkening to his commands, and rejoicing to be his servants. This is life indeed, for here is favour, here is pardon, here is sanctity, the renewing of the soul by the washing of water, through the Word.

"But," saith one, "I have a longing within me which I cannot satisfy. I feel sure that if I be pardoned yet there is something which I want—which nothing I have ever heard of, or have ever seen or handled, can satisfy. I have within me an aching void which the world can never fill." "There was a time," says one, "when I was satisfied with the theatre, when the amusements, the pleasures of men of the world, were very satisfactory to me. But lo! I have pressed this olive till it yields no more the generous oil. My joys have faded; the beauty of my fat valley hath become as a faded flower. No longer can I rejoice in the music of this world." Ah! soul, glad am I that thy cistern has become dry, for till men are dissatisfied with this world they never look out for the next; till the god of this world has utterly deceived them they will not look to him who is the only living and true God.

But hearken! thou that art wretched and miserable, here is living water that can quench thy thirst. Come hither and drink, and thou shalt be satisfied; for he that is a believer in Christ finds enough for him in Christ now, and enough for ever. The believer is not the man who has to pace his room, saying, "I find no amusements and no delight." He is not the man whose days are weary, and whose nights are long, for he finds in religion such a spring of joy, such a fountain of consolation, that he is content and happy. Put him in a dungeon and he will find good company; place him in a barren wilderness, still he would eat the bread of heaven; drive him away from friendship, he will find the "friend that sticketh closer than a brother." Blast all his gourds, and he will find shadow beneath the rock of ages; sap the foundation of his earthly hopes, but since the foundation of his God standeth sure, his heart will still be fixed, trusting in the Lord. There is such a fulness in religion, that I can honestly testify from experience,

"I would not change my best estate,
For all that earth calls good or great."

I never knew what happiness was till I knew Christ. I thought I did. I warmed my hands before the fire of sin, but it was a painted fire. But, oh, when once I tasted the Saviour's love, and had been washed in Jesu's blood, that was heaven begun below.

"'Tis heaven on earth, 'tis heaven above,
To see his face, to taste his love."

Oh, if ye did but know the joys of religion, if ye did but know the sweetness of love to Christ, surely ye could not stand aloof. If ye could but catch a glimpse of the believer when he is dancing for joy, you would renounce your wildest mirth, your greatest joy, to become the meanest child in the family of God. Thus then it is the living water, it is the water of life, because it satisfies our thirst, and gives us the reality of life which we can never find in anything beneath the sky.

And here let me add very briefly, he who once drinks of this water of life, drinks that which will quench his thirst for ever. You shall never thirst again, except it be that you shall long for deeper draughts of this living fountain. It shall not be a thirst of pain, it shall be a thirst of joy—a happy thirst, you will find it a sweet thing to be thirsting after more of Christ's love Become a Christian, and thou shalt be satisfied; thou shalt then be able to say,—"Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord has dealt bountifully with thee." Thou shalt rest for ever on the dear bosom of the Saviour, where thou shalt find eternal joy and peace. Oh, come and take of him, and drink of the water of life freely.

And, moreover, he who drinketh of this living water shall never die. His body shall see corruption for a little while, but his soul, mounting aloft, shall dwell with Jesus. Yea! and his very body, when it has passed through the purifying process, shall rise again more glorious than when it was sown in weakness. It shall rise in glory, in honor, in power, in majesty, and united with the soul, it shall everlastingly inherit the joys which Christ has prepared for them that love him. This is the living

water; I see the fountain flowing now, freely flowing, sparkling with all these blessings. Who would not long to come and drink thereof?

II. In the second place we observe from the text that the invitation is very wide—"WHOSOEVER WILL, LET HIM TAKE THE WATER OF LIFE FREELY." How wide is this invitation! There are some ministers who are afraid to invite sinners. Then why are they ministers? for they are afraid to perform the most important part of the sacred office. There was a time, I must confess, when I somewhat faltered to give a free invitation. My doctrinal sentiments did at that time somewhat hamper me. I boldly avow that I am unchanged as to the doctrines I have preached; I preach Calvanism as high, as stern, and as sound as ever; but I do feel, and always did feel an anxiety to invite sinners to Christ. And I do feel also, that not only is such a course consistent with the soundest doctrines, but that the other course is after all the unsound one, and has no title whatever to plead Scripture on its behalf. There has grown up in many Baptist churches an idea that none are to be called to Christ but those they call *sensible* sinners. I sometimes rebut that by remarking, that I call *stupid* sinners to Christ as well as sensible sinners, and that stupid sinners make by far the greatest proportion of the ungodly. But I glory in the avowal that I preach Christ even to *insensible* sinners—that I would say even to the dry bones of the valley, as Ezekiel did, "Ye dry bones, live!" doing it as an act of faith; not faith in the power of those that hear to obey the command, but faith in the power of God who gives the command to give strength also to those addressed, that they may be constrained to obey it. But now listen to my text; for here, at least, there is no limitation. But sensible or insensible, all that the text saith is, "Whosoever *will*, let him come and take the water of life freely."

The one question I have to ask this morning is, art thou willing? if so, Christ bids thee take the water of life. Art thou willing? if so, be pardoned, be sanctified, be made whole. For if thou art willing, Christ is willing too, and thou art freely invited to come and welcome to the fountain of life and grace.

Now mark, the question has to do with the *will*. "Oh," says one, "I am so foolish I cannot understand the plan of salvation, therefore I may not come and drink." But my question has nothing to do with your understanding, it has to do with your will. You may be as big a fool as you choose, but if you are willing to come to Christ you are freely invited. If you could not read a single letter in the alphabet, or spell out a word in the book, yet may your lips—ignorant lips though they be—now drink of this water of life. It has nothing to do with your understanding; it does not say "Whosoever *understandeth* let him come," but "whosoever *will*," and I do not doubt but what there are many souls who when they first come to Christ, have very little understanding of the way of salvation, and very little knowledge of the way in which he saves; but they come to Christ, the Holy Ghost makes them willing to come, and so they are saved. Oh ye who have been for many a year wearing the pauper's garb, ye who come here from the workhouse, ye that are ignorant, ye that are despised among men—are you *willing* to be saved? Can you say from your heart, "Lord, thou knowest I would have my sins forgiven? Then come and welcome. Jesus bids thee come. Let not thine ignorance keep thee away. He appeals, not to thine understanding, but to thy will.

"Oh," says one, "I can understand the plan of salvation, but I cannot repent as I would. Sir, *my heart* is so hard, I cannot bring the tear to my eye. I cannot feel my sins as I would desire.

> 'My heart, how dreadful hard it is,
> How heavy here it lies;
> Heavy and cold within my breast,
> Just like a rock of ice!'"

Ay, but this text has nothing to do with your heart; it is with your *will*. Are you willing? Then be your heart hard as the nether millstone, if thou art willing to be saved I am bidden to invite thee. "Whosoever *will*," not "whosoever feels," but "whosoever will, let him come and take the water of life freely." "Yes," says one, "I can honestly say I am willing, but my heart will not soften. I wish that grace would

change me. I can say I wish that Christ would soften my heart. I do desire that he would put the living fire within my cold breast and make me repent, and make me love him, and make me believe in him. *I am willing.*" Well, then, the text is for thee, "Whosoever *will*, let him come." If thou art willing thou art freely invited to Christ. "No," saith one, "but I am such a great sinner. I have been a drunkard; I have been a lascivious man; I have gone far astray from the paths of rectitude. I would not have all my sins known to my fellow creatures. How can God accept of such a wretch as I am, such a foul creature as I have been?" Mark thee, man! There is no reference made here to thy past life. It simply says, "whosoever will." Art thou willing? Art thou willing to be saved? Canst thou say, "Now, Lord, I am willing to be saved, give me a new heart; I am willing to give up my sins; I am willing to be a Christian; I am willing to believe and willing to obey, but oh for this no strength have I. Lord, I have the will; give me the power." Then thou art freely invited to come, if thou art but willing. There is no barrier between thee and Christ except thy stubborn will. If thy will is subdued, and if thou art saying "Yes, Lord, I am willing," then art thou freely invited. Oh, reject not the nvitation, but come and welcome, sinner come."

"But," saith one, "I *cannot* come, I cannot believe, I cannot do as I would." Well, but it does not say, "Whosoever *can*, let him come," but "whosoever *will*, let him come." Art thou willing? You know there is many a man that has more will than power, but God estimates us not by our power, but by our will. You see a man on horseback, he is in haste to fetch a doctor for some dying man; the horse is a miserable one, and will not go as rapidly as the man would like, but you cannot scold him, because you see him whipping and spurring, and thus proving that he would go if he could, and so the master takes the man's will for the deed. So is it with you, your poor heart will not go, but it would go if it could. So Jesus invites you, not according to what you can, but according to what you will. "Whosoever will, let him come and take the water of life freely." All the stipulation is—art thou willing—truly willing? If

so, thou art freely welcome. Thou art earnestly invited to take of the water of life, and that freely too.

Surely as this goes round the hall, there will be many found who will answer to it, and who will say, from all their hearts, "I am willing, I am willing." Come, let the question go personally round. Let me not talk to you in the mass, but let the arrow reach the individual. Grey head, give thy reply, and let yon fair-haired boy answer also. Are you willing now to be saved—are you willing to forsake sin—willing to take Christ to be your master from this day forth and forever? Are you willing to be washed in his blood? Willing to be clothed in his righteousness? Are you willing to be made happy—willing to escape from hell, and willing to enter heaven? Strange that it should be necessary to ask such questions, but still it is. Are you willing? Then remember that whatever may be against you,—whatever may have defiled you—however black, however filthy, however worthless you may be, you are invited this day to take of the fountain of the water of life freely, for you are willing, and it is said, "Whosoever *will*, let him come."

"Ah!" saith one, "God knows I am willing, but still I do not think I am worthy." No, I know you are not, but what is that to do with it? It is not "whosoever is *worthy*," but "whosoever *will*, let him come." "Well," says one, "I believe that whosoever will, may come, but not me, for I am the vilest sinner out of hell." But hark thee, sinner, it says, "*whosoever*." What a big word that is! Whosoever! There is no standard-height here. It is of any height and any size. Little sinners, big sinners, black sinners, fair sinners, sinners doubled-dyed, old sinners, aggravated sinners, sinners who have committed every crime in the whole catalogue,—*whosoever*. Doth this exempt one? Who can be excluded from this whosoever? It mattereth not who thou mayest be, nor what thou mayest have been, if thou art willing to be saved; free as the air thou breathest is the love and grace of God. "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

Thus have I tried to show you how broad the invitation is.

III. And now I am about to show you, in the third place, how

clear the path is. "WHOSOEVER WILL, LET HIM TAKE THE WATER OF LIFE FREELY."

That word "let" is a very curious word, because it signifies two opposite things. "Let" sometimes signifies "hinder." "He that letteth shall be taken away,"—that is, "he that hindereth." But here, in our text, it means the removing of all hindrance. "*Let* him come,"—methinks I hear Jehovah speaking this. Here is the fountain of love and mercy. But you are too unworthy, you are too vile. Hear Jehovah! He cries, "*Let him come*, he is willing. Stand back! doubts and fears; away with you; let him come; make a straight road; let him come if he be but willing." Then the devil himself comes forward, and striding across the way, he says to the poor trembling soul, "I will spill thy blood; thou shalt never have mercy. I defy thee; thou shalt never believe in Christ, and never be saved." But Christ says, "*Let him come*," and Satan, strong though he be, quails beneath Jehovah's voice, and Jesus drives him away, and the path stands clear this morning, nor can sin, nor death, nor hell block up the way, when Jehovah Jesus says, "*Let* him come."

Methinks I see several ministers standing in the way. They are of such high doctrine that they dare not invite a sinner, and therefore they clog the gospel with so many conditions. They will have it that the sinner must feel a certain quantity of experience before he is invited to come, and so they put their sermons up and say, "You are not invited, you are a dead sinner; you must not come, you are not invited, you are a hardened rebel." "Stand back," says Christ, "every one of you, though ye be my servants. *Let him come*, he is willing—stand not in his way." It is a sad thing that Christ's ministers should become the devil's aiders and abettors, and yet sometimes they are, for when they are telling a sinner how much he must feel, and how much he must know before he comes to Christ, they are virtually rolling big stones in the path, and saying to the willing sinner, "Thou mayest not come." In the name of Almighty God, stand back everything this morning that keeps the willing sinner from Christ. Away with you, away with you; Christ sprinkles his blood upon the way, and cries to you, 'Vanish, leave the

road clear; *let him come*, stand not in his path, make straight before him his way, level the mountains and fill up the valleys, make straight through the wilderness a highway for him to come to drink of this water of life freely. '*Let him come.*'"

Oh! is not that a precious word of command! for it has all the might of Omnipotence in it. God said, "Let there be light, and there was light," and he says, "Let him come," and come he will and must, that is but willing to come. "Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." And now, sinner, remember God says "*come.*" Is there anything in thy way? Remember, he adds, "*Let him come.*" He bids everything stand out of thy way. Standing one day in the court-house, some witness was required, I forget his name; it may have been Brown, for instance; in one moment the name was announced, 'Brown, Samuel Brown," bye-and-by twenty others take up the cry, "Samuel Brown, Samuel Brown." There was seen a man pushing his way through. "Make room," said he, "make room, his honor calls me," and though there were many in his path, they gave way, because his being called was a sufficient command for them, not to hinder him, but to let him come. And now, soul, if thou be a willing sinner, though thy name is not mentioned—if thou be a willing sinner, thou art as truly called as though thou wert called by name, and therefore push through thy fears. Make room, and come; they that would stop thee are cowards. *He* has said "Let him come," and they cannot keep you back; Jehovah has said, "Let him come," and it is yours now to say, "I will come." There is nothing that shall hinder me, I will push through everything, and

> "To the gracious King approach,
> Whose sceptre mercy gives."

I will go to the fountain and take of the water of life freely.

IV. This brings me to the last head, the condition which is the death of all conditions—LET HIM TAKE IT FREELY.

Methinks I see one here, who is saying, "I would be saved, and I will do what I can to be worthy of it." The fountain is free, and he comes with his halfpenny in his hand, and that a bad

one, and he says, "Here, sir, give me a cup of this living water to drink; I am well worthy of it, for see the price is in my hand." Why, man, if you could bring the wealth of Potosi, or all the diamonds of Golconda, and all the pearls of Ormuz, you could not buy this most costly thing. Put up your money, you could not have it for gold or silver. The man brings his merit, but heaven is not to be sold to merit-mongers. Or perhaps you say, "I will go to church regularly, I will give to the poor, I will attend my meeting house, I will take a sitting, I will be baptized, I will do this and the other, and then no doubt I shall have the water of life." Back, miserable herd! bring not your rags and rubbish to God, he wants them not. Stand back! you insult the Almighty when you tender anything as payment. Back with ye; he invites not such as you to come. He says, come freely. He needs no recommendation. You want no good works. Do not bring any. But you have no good feelings. Nevertheless you are willing, therefore come. He wants no good feelings of you. You have no belief and no repentance, yet nevertheless you are willing.

> "True belief and true repentance—
> Every grace that brings us nigh,
> Without money,
> Come to Jesus Christ and buy."

Do not try to get them yourself—come to him, and he will give them to you. Come just as you are; it is "freely," "without money and without price." The drinking fountains at the corners of our streets are valuable institutions; but I cannot imagine any one being so foolish, as when he comes to the drinking fountains, saying, "I cannot drink, because I have not five pounds in my pocket." Why, however poor the man is, there is the fountain, and, poor as he is, he may drink of it. It is put there for the public. Thirsty souls, as they go by, whether they are dressed in fustian or in broadcloth, don't look for any warrant for drinking; they come and drink of it freely. Here it is; the liberality of some good friend has put it there, and they take it and ask no questions whatever. Perhaps the only persons that ever need to go thirsty through the street

where there is a drinking fountain, are the fine ladies and gentlemen who are in their carriages. They are very thirsty, and cannot think of being so vulgar as to get out to drink. It would bemean them, they think, to drink at a common drinking fountain; so they go with parched lips. Oh, how many there are that are rich, rich in their own good works, that cannot come to Christ! "I will not be saved," they say, "in the same way as a harlot or a swearer." What! go to heaven the same way as a chimney sweep! Is there no pathway to glory but the path which a Magdalen may take? I will not be saved that way." Then you fine gentry may remain without. You are not bidden to come, for you are not willing. But remember,

> "None are excluded hence,
> But those who do themselves exclude;
> Welcome the learned and polite,
> The ignorant and rude."

"Whosoever will, let him come." Let him bring nothing to recommend him. Let him not imagine he can give any payment to God, or any ransom for his soul; for the one condition that excludes all conditions is, "Let him come and take the water of life freely." There is a man of God here, who has drank of the river of the water of life many times; but he says, "I want to know more of Christ; I want to have nearer fellowship with him; I want to enter more closely into the mystery of his sacrifice; I want to understand more and more of the fellowship of his sufferings, and to be made conformable unto his death." Well, believer, drink freely. You have filled your bowl of faith once, and you drank the draught off; fill it again, drink again, and keep on drinking. Put your mouth to the fountain, if you will. As good Rutherford says in one of his letters, "I have been sinking my bucket down into the well full often, but now my thirst after Christ has become so insatiable, that I long to put the well itself to my lips, and drain it all." Well, take it freely as much as ever you can. You have come now into the field of Boaz; you may pick up every ear that you can find; nay, more than that, you may carry away the sheaves, if you like; and more than that, you may claim the whole field

to be yours, if you will. The eating and drinking at Christ's table is like that of Ahasuerus, only in an opposite way. It is said of that table, none did compel; it is said of this, none doth withhold; none can restrain. If there be a big vessel full of this holy water, drink it all up; and if there be one that holdeth twelve firkins, drink it, yea, drink it all, and thou shalt find that even then there is as much as ever. In Christ there is enough for all, enough for each, enough for evermore; and none shall ever have need to say that there was not enough in Christ for him. Drink freely. So you see that there are two meanings—drink without price, and drink without stint.

We have an old proverb, that there are certain guests who come to our houses who are more free than they are welcome. They make free themselves, and go further than we can bid them welcome. But with regard to those who come to the fountain of living waters, you may make as free as you will and you are welcome; make as free as you can, take this water as you will, Christ will not deny you. He that stands by the fountain will never mourn because you drink too much; he will never be dissatisfied because such a black fellow as you has dared to wash himself in the living stream. No, but the blacker you are the more will he rejoice that you have been washed; the more thirsty you are the more will his soul be gladdened to have you drink even to the full and be satisfied. He is not enriched by withholding; rather he is enriched in joy by giving. It is as much a pleasure to Christ to save you as it will be to you to be saved. He is just as glad to see the poor, the lame, the halt and the blind sit at his table as ever they can be to sit there. He is just as pleased to carry men to heaven as they themselves can be when they drink of the river of joy at the fountain-head of eternity. "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

And now I do not know what to say further. My text is such a precious one, that I cannot enter into the fulness of its freeness and sweetness. Remember, my dear friends, if you are willing to be saved, God requires nothing of you except that you will yield yourselves up to Christ. If you are willing to be saved, none can prevent; there is no obstacle. You are not

going like the daughters of Hobab to a well from which you will be driven by the rudeness of shepherds. You are come where Jesus stands—stands with open arms, stands with open mouth, crying to you this day, "If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink, and whosoever will let him take the water of life freely."

And now will you refuse the invitation? See that you refuse not him that speaketh! Will you go this day and abuse the free mercy of God? Shall this very mercy lead you into more sin? Will you be wicked enough to say, that because grace is free, therefore you will continue in sin year after year?

Oh do not so; grieve not the Spirit of God; to-day is the accepted time · to-day is the day of salvation. If ye turn not he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready. You have been warned, your conscience has often pricked you, now this day you are sweetly invited. But the time of warnings and invitations will not last forever; they will soon be over, and when your funeral knell is tolling, you shall be in that lake of fire, that land of misery and pain, where not a drop of water shall cool your burning tongue. As you would escape from the flames of hell, as you would be delivered from the eternal torments, I beseech thee now consider thy ways, and if now thou art willing thou art invited and none can keep thee back from his mercy. "Whosoever will let him take the water of life freely." Shall I preach in vain? Will you all go away and not take the water of life? Come soul—is there not one at least that God shall give me this day for my hire—not one? May I not take one of you by the hand, some poor sinning, erring brother? Come, brother, let us go together and drink. Oh, may the Holy Ghost incline you. Take it, my brother. See on that bloody tree Jesus hangs; behold, he pays his life a ransom for your sins and mine. Believe on him, trust him, commit your soul to him and be saved. Will you not say in your soul,

"Just as I am without one plea,
But that thy blood was shed for me,
And that thou bid'st me come to thee;
O lamb of God, I come, I come?"

And as my Master is true and faithful, he cannot cast away one soul that cometh, for "him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." Oh, Spirit, now draw reluctant hearts, and now give timid souls courage to believe for Jesus' sake. AMEN.

SERMON XXII.

THE FIRST RESURRECTION.

[Of this sermon the author makes mention, as one which had been used by the Spirit to bless the souls of men, both in the hearing and reading of it. It was delivered in his new Church Edifice, the Metropolitan Tabernacle, May 5, 1861. The doctrinal part of the discourse touches the much disputed question of the Millenium, and Christ's personal reign on the earth. His spirit is kind, his discussion manly, and his practical inferences plain, earnest and solemn.]

"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshiped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."—Rev. xx. 4, 5, 6.

"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works."—Rev. xx. 12.

You will bear me witness, my friends, that it is exceedingly seldom I ever intrude into the mysteries of the future with regard either to the second advent, the millennial reign, or the first and second resurrection. As often as we come across it in

our expositions, we do not turn aside from the point, but if guilty at all on this point, it is rather in being too silent than saying too much. And now, in bringing forward this question, I would say, I do not do it to amuse your curiosity by novelty, or that I may pretend to have the true key of the prophecies which are as yet unfulfilled. I scarcely think it would be justifiable for me to spend my time upon prophetic studies for which I have not the necessary talent, nor is it the vocation to which my Master has ordained me. I think some ministers would do far more for the profit of God's people, if they would preach more about the first advent and less about the second. But I have chosen this topic because I believe it has practical bearings, and may be made useful, instructive, and rousing to us all.

I find that the most earnest of the Puritanic preachers did not forbear to dwell upon this mysterious subject. I turn to Charnock; and in his disquisition upon the Immutability of God, he does not hesitate to speak of the conflagration of the world, of the millennial reign, and the new heavens and new earth. I turn to Richard Baxter, a man who greatly loved the souls of men; who more perhaps than any man, with the exception of the apostle Paul, travailed in birth for souls; and I find him making a barbed arrow out of the doctrine of the coming of the Lord, and thrusting this great truth into the very heart and conscience of unbelievers, as though it were heaven's own sword. John Bunyan too—plain, honest John—he who preached so simply that a child could comprehend him, and was certainly never guilty of having written upon his forehead the word "Mystery," he, too, speaks of the advent of Christ, and of the glories which shall follow; and uses this doctrine as a stimulus to the saints, and as a warning to the ungodly. I do not think therefore I need tremble very much if the charge should be brought against me of bringing before you an unprofitable subject. It shall profit if God shall bless the word; and if it be God's word we may expect his blessing if we preach it all, but he will withdraw it if we refrain from teaching any part of his council because in our pretended wisdom we fancy that it would not have practical effect.

Now, my dear friends, in introducing again these texts to

you, I shall remark that in the first text which relates to the people of God, we have *three great privileges:* and in the second text, which relates to the ungodly who are not in covenant with Christ, we have *three great and terrible facts* which may soon be perceived.

I. We take the first text with its THREE PRIVILEGES. "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."

Before I proceed to these privileges, I must remark that two modes of understanding this verse have been proposed, both of which I think are untenable. I have been reading carefully through Albert Barnes. He gives it, as his opinion, that the first resurrection here spoken of is a *resurrection of principles*, —a resurrection of the patience, the undaunted courage, the holy boldness and constancy of the ancient martyrs. He says these great principles have been forgotten, and, as it were, buried; and that during the spiritual reign of Christ which is to come, these great principles will have a resurrection. Now, I appeal to you, would you, in reading that passage, think this to be the meaning? Would any man believe that to be its meaning, if he had not some thesis to defend? The fact is, we sometimes read Scripture, thinking of what it ought to say, rather than what it does say. I do not hesitate to affirm that any simple-minded person, who was intent upon discovering the mind of the Spirit, and not upon finding a method by which the words could be compelled to express his own mind, would say that the resurrection of principles, or the resurrection of doctrines, does not give the fair meaning of the words here stated. Brethren, cannot you perceive at a glance that this is the resurrection of *men?* And is it not a literal resurrection, too? Does it not say, "I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus?" Is it not written, "The rest of the dead lived not?" Does this mean the rest of the dead principles? the rest of the dead doctrines? You cannot so translate it. It is—we have no doubt whatever—a literal resurrection of the saints of God, and not of principles nor of doctrines.

But another interpretation has been proposed. I once had the misfortune to listen to an excellent friend of mine who was preaching upon this very text, and I must confess, I did not attend with very great patience to his exposition. He said it meant, blessed and holy is he who has been born again, who has been regenerated, and so has had a resurrection from dead works by the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. All the while he was preaching, I could not help wishing that I could propose to him the difficulty, how he would make this metaphorical interpretation agree with the literal fact, that the rest of the dead lived not till the thousand years were finished? For, if the first resurrection here spoken of is a metaphorical, or spiritual, or typical resurrection, why the next where it speaks of the resurrection of the dead must be spiritual, and mystical, and metaphorical too. Now, no one would agree to this. You know, when you read a chapter, you are not to say, "This part is a symbol, and is to be read so, and the next part is to be read literaliy." Brethren, the Holy Ghost does not jumble metaphors and facts together. A typical book has plain indications that it is so intended, and when you come upon a literal passage in a typical chapter, it is always attached to a something else which is distinctly literal, so that you cannot, without violence to common sense, make a typical meaning out of it. The fact is, in reading this passage with an unbiassed judgment, having no purpose whatever to serve, having no theory to defend,—and I confess I have none, for I know but very little about mysteries to come,—I could not help seeing there are *two literal resurrections* here spoken of, one of the spirits of the just, and the other of the bodies of the wicked; one of the saints who sleep in Jesus, whom God shall bring with *him*, and another of those who live and die impenitent, who perish in their sins.

But this by way of preface. There are three privileges in the text.

1. Now the first privilege, *the priority of resurrection*. I think Scripture is exceedingly plain and explicit upon this point. You have perhaps imagined that all men will rise at the same moment; that the trump of the archangel will break open every grave at the same instant, and sound in the ear of every sleeper at the identical moment. Such I do not think is the testimony

of the Word of God. I think the Word of God teaches, indisputably, that the saints shall rise first. And be the interval of time whatever it may, whether the thousand years are literal years, or a very long period of time, I am not now about to determine; I have nothing to do except with the fact that there are two resurrections, a resurrection of the just, and afterwards of the unjust,—a time when the saints of God shall rise, an after-time when the wicked shall rise to the resurrection of damnation. I shall now refer you to one or two passages in Scripture, and you will use your Bibles and follow me. First, let us look at the words of the apostle in that chapter which we use generally as a burial service, the first epistle to the Corinthians, xv. 20:—"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power." There has been an interval of two thousand years between "Christ the firstfruits" and the "afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." Why not then a thousand years between that first resurrection and "the end?" Here is a resurrection of those who are Christ's, and of them only. As for the wicked, one would scarce know that they would rise at all from this passage, if it were not for the general statement, "All shall be made alive," and even this may not be so comprehensive as at first sight it seems. It is enough for me that there is here a particular and exclusive resurrection of those who are Christ's.

Turn to another passage, which is, perhaps, plainer still; the first epistle to the Thessalonians, iv. 13:—"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent"—or

have a preference beyond—"them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." Here is nothing said whatever about the resurrection of the wicked; it is only stated that the dead in Christ shall rise first. Our apostle is evidently speaking of a first resurrection: and since we know that a first resurrection implies a second, and since we know that the wicked dead are to rise as well as the righteous dead, we draw the inference that the wicked dead shall rise at the second resurrection, after the interval between the two resurrections shall have been accomplished.

Turn to Philippians iii., verses 8 and 11, and compare the two. "Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." What does he mean there? Every one will rise, no orthodox Christian doubts that. The doctrine of a general resurrection is received by all the Christian Church. What, then, is this resurrection after which Paul was exerting himself, if by any means he might attain unto it? It could not be the general resurrection; he would attain unto that, live as he list. It must have been some superior resurrection, of which only those shall be partakers who have known Christ and the power of his resurrection, having been made conformable unto his death. I think you cannot interpret this passage, or give it any force of meaning, without you admit that there is to be a prior resurrection of the just, before the resurrection of the unjust.

If you will turn to a passage in Luke xx. 35, which probably is fresh upon your memories, you will find there something which I will venture to call a clear proof of a special resurrection. The Sadducees had proposed a difficulty as to the rela-

tionship of men and women in the future state, and Jesus here says, "But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection." Now, brethren, there is some *worthiness* necessary for this resurrection. Do you not perceive it? There is some distinction involved in being called the children of the resurrection. Now, again I say, you do not doubt but that all shall rise. In that sense, then, every man would be one of the children of the resurrection; in that sense, no worthiness would be required for resurrection at all. There must be, then, a resurrection for which worthiness is needed, a resurrection which shall be a distinguished privilege, which, being obtained, shall confer upon its possessor the distinguished and honorable title of a "child of the resurrection." It seems to me that this is plain enough, and can be put beyond all dispute.

In chapter xiv. of the same gospel, in verse 14, you have a promise made to those who, when they make a feast, do not do it with the intention of getting anything in return. "When thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." I would not insist upon it that this would prove that the just rose at a different time; but still there is to be a resurrection of the just, and on the other hand, there is to be a resurrection of the unjust; and the time of recompense for the righteous is to be the resurrection of the just, which is spoken of as being a particular period. He might just as well have said, "Thou shalt be recompensed at the general resurrection." There was no need to have said, "At the resurrection of the just," if the two are to happen at the same time. The words "of the just" are superfluous in the passage, unless they do refer to some era distinguished and distinct from the resurrection of the unjust. I will not say that this is any clear proof, but still, all these put together, with other passages I might quote if time did not fail me, would, I think, establish upon a Scriptural basis the doctrine of the two resurrections.

But I would refer to one more, which seems to me to be exceedingly clear, in John vi, 39, 40, 44, 54. In these verses the Saviour four times over speaks of his own believing people, and promises them a resurrection. "I will raise him up at the last day." Now, is there any joy or beauty in this, to the people of God in particular, unless there be a speciality in it for them? It is the lot of all to rise, and yet we have here a privilege for the elect! Surely, brethren, there is a different resurrection. Besides, there is yet a passage which now springs to my memory in the Hebrews, where the apostle, speaking of the trials of the godly, and their noble endurance, speaks of them as "not accepting deliverance that they might obtain a better resurrection." The *betterness* was not in the after results of resurrection, but in the resurrection itself. How, then, could it be a better resurrection, unless there be some distinction between the resurrection of the saint and the resurrection of the sinner? Let the one be a resurrection of splendor; let the other be a resurrection of gloom and horror, and let there be a marked division between the two, that as it was in the beginning, it may be even to the end, the Lord hath put a difference between him that feareth God and him that feareth him not

I am well aware that I have not been able to put the argument so well but that any antagonist may cavil at it; but I have been preaching to my own congregation rather than fighting with opponents, and I hope you will take these passages and weigh them for yourselves, and if they do not teach you that the dead in Christ shall rise first, do not believe me if I say they do. If you cannot perceive the fact yourself, if the Holy Spirit show it not unto you, why then read the passage again, and find if you can another and a better meaning. I have no purpose to serve except to make the Scripture as plain to you as possible; and I say it yet again, I have not the shadow of a doubt in my own mind that these passages do teach us that there shall first of all be a resurrection concerning which it shall be said, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."

2. I now pass to the second privilege promised to the godly. *The second death on them hath no power.* This, too, is a literal death; none the less literal because its main terror is spiritual, for a spiritual death is as literal as a carnal death. The death which shall come upon the ungodly, without exception, can never touch the righteous. Oh, brethren, this is the best of all. As for the first resurrection, if Christ hath granted that to his people, there must be something glorious in it if we cannot perceive it. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know when he shall appear we shall be like *him*." I think the glories of the first resurrection belong to the glories which shall be revealed *in* us rather than to the glories that are revealed *to* us. What shall be the majesty of that form in which we shall rise, what the distinguished happiness we shall then enjoy, we can but guess at a distance, we cannot know it to the full. But on this point we can understand what Scripture states, and understand this much well, that damnation, the second death, shall have no power on those who rise at the first resurrection. How should it? How can damnation fall on any but those who are sinners and are guilty of sin? But the saints are not guilty of sin. They have sinned like others, and they were by nature the children of wrath even as others. But their sin has been lifted from them: it was laid upon the scapegoat's head of old. He, the Eternal substitute, even our Lord Jesus, carried all their guilt and their iniquity into the wilderness of forgetfulness, where it shall never be found against them forever. They wear the Saviour's righteousness, even as they have been washed in his blood; and what wrath can lie on the man who is not only guiltless through the blood, but is meritorious through imputed righteousness! Oh, arm of Justice, thou art nerveless to smite the blood-washed! Oh, ye flames of hell, how could even so much as the breath of your heat pass upon the man who is safe covered in the Saviour's wounds! How is it possible for you, O Deaths, Destructions, Horrors, Glooms, Plagues, and Terrors, so much as to flit over the serene sky of the spirit which has found peace with God through the blood of Christ! No, brethren,

"Bold shall I stand in that great day;
For who aught to my charge shall lay?
While, through thy blood, absolved I am
From sin's tremendous curse and shame."

There shall be a second death; but over us it shall have no power. Do you understand the beauty of the picture? As if we might walk through the flames of hell and they should have *no power* to devour us any more than when the holy children walked with ease over the hot coals of Nebuchadnezzar's seven times heated furnace. Death may bend his bow and fit the arrow to the string. But we laugh at thee, O Death! and thee, O hell, we will despise! for over both of you, ye enemies of man, we shall be more than conquerors through him that hath loved us. We shall stand invulnerable and invincible, defying and laughing to scorn every foe. And all this because we are washed from sin and covered with a spotless righteousness.

But there is another reason why the second death can have no power on the believer; because, when the prince of this world cometh against us, then we shall be able to say what our Master did, "He hath nothing in me." When we shall rise again, we shall be freed from all corruption; no evil tendencies shall remain in us. "I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed—for the Lord dwelleth in Zion." "Without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing," without even the shadow of a spot which the eye of Omniscience could discover, we shall be as pure as Adam before his fall, as holy as the Immaculate manhood when it first came from the divine hand. We shall be better than Adam, for Adam might sin, but we shall be so established in goodness, in truth, and in righteousness, that we shall not even be tempted again, much less shall we have any fear of falling. We shall stand spotless and faultless at the last great day. Brethren, lift up you heads. Contending with sin, cast down with doubts, lift up your heads, and wipe the tears from your eyes. There are days coming, the like of which angels have not seen, but you shall see them. There are times coming when your spirits shall no more fear the chain, nor shall ye even remember the worm wood and the gall. And when they rise they shall leave the old Adam behind them. Blessed day! One of the most blessed

parts of heaven—of heaven above or of heaven below—will be freedom from the tendency to sin, a total death to that old nature which has been our plague and woe.

3. The third privilege of the text is, "*They shall reign with him a thousand years.*" Here is another point upon which there has been a long and vigorous contention. It was believed in the early Church, (I do not know whether there is any Scriptural foundation for the precise date they fixed), that the seventh thousand years of the world's history would be a Sabbath; that, as there were six days of toil in the week, and the seventh was a day of rest, so the world would have six thousand years of toil and sorrow, and the seventh thousand would be a thousand years of rest. I say I do not know that there is any Scripture for that; I do know that there is none against it. I believe the Lord himself shall come, "but of that day and of that hour knoweth no man, no, not even the angels of God." And I think it is idle to attempt to fix the year or even the century, when Christ shall come. Our business is to expect him always, to be always looking for his appearing, watching for his coming; that whether he come at cock-crow, or midnight, or at morning watch, we may be ready to go in with the wise virgins to the marriage feast, and rejoice with our beloved. If there have been any dates given, I am not able at present to find them out. All these dates and mysteries I can leave to much more learned men, and men who give their whole time to it.

The book of Revelation needs another expounder besides those who have loaded our shelves until they groan, for they have generally made confusion worse confounded. Their expositions have been rather "an obvelation" than a revelation; they have rather darkened counsel by words without knowledge, than made the dark things plain. I am prepared to go about as far as my predecessor, Dr. Gill went; as far as the old fathers of the Church went; as far as Baxter and Bunyan would have gone, but to go no further than that. Yet I think we may say this morning, there is in the text a distinct promise that the saints are to reign with Christ a thousand years; and I believe they are to reign with him *upon this earth*. There are some passages which I think obtain a singular fulness of meaning if this be true. Turn to

Psalm xxxvii. 10, 11. It is that Psalm where David has been fretting himself, because of the evil doers, and their prosperity upon the earth. He says, "For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace." You can interpret that to mean that the meek man shall enjoy much more of this world's goods than the sinner, and that he shall have abundance of peace. But I think you have given it a lean meaning, a very lean meaning, indeed. If it be true that these meek ones shall yet possess this very earth, and that here, in the abundance of peace through the Messiah's reign, they shall rejoice in it, I think you have found a fuller meaning, and one which is more like God's promises.

So it is that God's promises always have a wider meaning than we can conceive; now, in this case, if it only mean that the meek are to have what they gain in this life, which is very little indeed, if they are only to have what they enjoy here upon earth, which is so little, that I think if in this life only they have hope, they are of men the most miserable—if it only mean that, then the promise means less than we might conceive it to mean. But if it mean that they shall have glory even here, then you have given to it one of the widest meanings you can conceive, a meaning like the promises of God—wide, extensive, and worthy of himself. Brethren, the meek do not inherit the earth to any great degree at present, and we look for this in another age. Let me quote the language of Christ, lest you should think this passage peculiar to the Old Testament dispensation, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." How? where? when? Not now certainly, not in Christ's days, not in apostolic times, by any means. What did the meek inherit, brethren? Faggot, flames, racks, pincers, dungeons. Their inheritance, indeed, was nothing. They were destitute, afflicted, tormented; they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; and if the meek are ever to inherit the earth, certainly it must be in some age to come, for they have never inherited it yet.

Turn again to a passage in Revelation, v. 9, 10: "And they sung a new song." It is the very song we sang this morning, and it

runs thus: "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign *on the earth*." Whether any one disputes the genuineness of these words, I do not know; but if they mean anything at all, if the Holy Spirit meant to set forth any meaning, surely it must have been that the people of Christ shall reign upon the earth. Besides, remember our Saviour's words in Matthew, xix. 28, where, in answer to a question which had been put by Peter, as to what his saints should have as the result of their losses for his sake, he said unto them, "Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life." It seems that Christ here is to come in the regeneration, when in a new-born world there shall be joys fitted for the new-born spirits; and then there shall be splendors and glories for the apostles first, and for all those who by any means have suffered any losses for Christ Jesus.

You find such passages as these in the Word of God: "The Lord of Hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously." You find another like this in Zachariah, "My God shall come with the multitude of his saints." Indeed, I could not now take up your time by quoting many passages in which it seems to me that nothing but the triumph on the very spot where they have fought the battle, nothing but the glory in the very place where they have had the tug of war, will meet the meaning of God's Word. I do look forward to this with joy, that though I may sleep in Christ before my Master come, and I know not whether that shall be or no, yet I shall rise at the day of his appearing, and shall be recompensed at the resurrection of the just, if I have truly and faithfully served him; and that recompense shall be, to be made like unto him, and to partake of his glories before the eyes of men, and to reign

with him during the thousand years. Dr. Watts, I believe, understood that Christ is to come literally, for he says,

> "Nor doth it yet appear
> How great we must be made;
> But *when we see our Saviour here,*
> We shall be like our Head."

But, to make one other observation. This doctrine which I have preached just now is not an unpractical one. For throughout the New Testament, whenever the apostle wants to stir up men to patience, to labor, to hope, to endurance, to holiness, he generally says something about the advent of Christ. "Be patient, brethren," says he, "for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." "Let your moderation be known unto all men, the Lord is at hand." "Judge nothing before the time, till the Lord come" "When the great Shepherd shall appear, ye also shall appear with him in glory." Brethren, I think we shall do wrong if we make too much of this; but we shall do equally wrong if we make too little of it. Let us give it a fair place in our thoughts, and especially let those of us who fear God and believe in Jesus, take this to be a window through which we can look, when the house is dark and our home is full of misery; let us look to the time when we shall rise among the first, following Christ the first fruits, when we shall reign with Christ, sharing in his glories, and when we shall know that the second death over us hath no power.

II. I shall now turn to the second part of the discourse briefly. To the ungodly, THREE THINGS IN SIMPLICITY.

Sinner, you have heard us speak of the resurrection of the righteous. To you the word "resurrection" has no music. There is no flash of joy in your spirit when you hear that the dead shall rise again. But oh, I pray thee lend me thine ear while I assure thee in God's name that thou shalt rise. Not only shall your soul live—you have perhaps become so brutish that you forget you have a soul—but your body itself shall live. Those eyes that have been full of lust shall see sights of horror; those ears which have listened to the temptations of the evil one,

shall hear the thunders of the day of judgment; those very feet that bare you to the theatre, shall attempt, but utterly fail to sustain you when Christ shall sit in judgment. Think not when your body is put into the soil that you have done with it. It has been partner with your soul in sin; it shall be sharer with your soul in the punishment. He is able to cast both body and soul into hell. The heathens believed in the immortality of the soul. We need not therefore prove what a heathen could conceive. It is the doctrine of the resurrection of the body which is peculiar to Christianity. You are not prepared to cast away the revelation of God I know. You receive that book as being God's book, and it tells me that all the dead, both small and great, shall rise. When the archangel's trump shall sound, the old inhabitants of the world before the flood shall rise out of the ocean. The buried palaces, the sunken homes, shall all give up the multitude who once married and were given in marriage, until Noah entered into the ark. Up shall rise from the great deeps of the fathomless sea, thousands upon thousands of men who have slept now these three and four thousand years. Every churchyard, too, where men have been quietly buried with Christian rites, but yet were unchristian still, shall yield up its dead.

The battle-field shall yield a mighty harvest, a harvest which was sown in blood, and which shall be reaped in tempest. Every place where man has lived and man has died shall see the dying quickened once again, and flesh and blood once more instinct with life. But the main thing with you is that *you* will be there. Living and dying as you now are, ungodly and unconverted, the most awful curse that could fall on you, with the exception of the damnation of your soul, is the sure and certain resurrection of your body. Go, now, and paint it if you will, and seek a beauty which the worm shall loathe. Go and pamper your body; drink the sweet and eat the fat. Go and luxuriate and indulge in ease. Oh, sir, you may well pamper your bodies, for there is short enough time for your body to have mirth; and when that short time is over thou shalt drink another wine —the dregs of the cup of God's wrath, which the wicked shall drain to the last drop. Satisfy thine ears with music now; thou

shalt soon hear nothing but the howling of the damned! Go thou thy way, eat, drink, and be merry; but for all these the Lord shall bring thee into judgment—sevenfold for all thy sinful pleasures, yea seventy times seven, for all thy joys of lust, and wickedness and crime, shall the Lord be avenged on thee, in the great and terrible day of his wrath. Sinner, think thou of this, and when thou sinnest think of the resurrection.

But after the resurrection, according to the text, comes *the judgment.* You have cursed God. The oath died away. No, sir, it did not; it imprinted itself upon the great book of God's remembrance. You have entered the chamber of wantonness, or the hall of infidelity; you have walked through the stews of crime, and through the stench and filth of the brothel; you have wandered into sin and plunged into it, thinking it would all die with the day. Not so. The books shall be opened. I think I see you with your blanching cheeks, closing your eyes because you dare not look upon the Judge when he opens that page where stands your history. I hear yon sinner, boldest among you all. He is crying, "Ye rocks fall on me." There they stand, sublime and dread, those granite rocks; he would rather be crushed than stand there before the avenging eye; but the mountains will not loosen, their flinty bowels feel no pangs of sympathy, they will not move. You stand while the fiery eye looks you through and through, and the dread voice reads on, and on, and on, your every act, and word, and thought. I see you as the shameful crime is read, and men and angels hear. I see your horror as a nameless deed is told, in terms explicit, which none can misunderstand. I hear your thoughts brought out—that lust, that murder which was in the thought, but never grew into the deed. And you are all this while astonished like Belshazzar, when he saw the writing on the wall and his loins were loose, and he was terribly afraid. So shall it be with you; and yet again, and again, and again, shall you send up that awful shriek, "Hide us! hide us from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb!"

But then cometh the end. After death the judgment; after judgment *the damnation.* If it be a dreadful thing to live again, if it be a more dreadful thing still to spend the first day of that

life in the grand assize of God, how much more awful shal. it be when the sentence is pronounced, and the terror of punishment shall begin! We believe that the souls of the wicked are already tormented, but this judgment will cast both body and soul into the lake of fire. Men and women, ye who fear not God, and have no faith in Jesus, I cannot picture to you damnation. Across it let me draw a curtain. But though we must not picture it, I pray you realize it. When Martin has painted some of his sublime pictures, he has generally heightened the effect by masses of darkness. Surely, this is the way in which God has painted hell, rather by masses of darkness than by definiteness of light. This much we know, that hell is a place of absence from God—a place for the developement of sin, where every passion is unbridled, every lust unrestrained—a place where God punishes night and day those who sin night and day—a place where there is never sleep, or rest, or hope—a place where a drop of water is denied, though thirst shall burn the tongue—a place where pleasure never breathed, where light never dawned, where anything like consolation was never heard of—a place where the gospel is denied, where mercy droops her wings and dies—a place where vengeance reigns, shakes his chains, and brandishes his sword—a place of fury and of burning, a place the like of which imagination hath not pictured. May God grant it may be a place which you shall never see, and whose dread you shall never feel. Sinner, instead of preaching it thee, let me bid thee fly from it. Die, sinner, and flight from hell becomes impossible; thou art lost, then, eternally. Oh, while yet thou art on praying ground, I pray thee, think on thy end. Think! think! this warning may be the last you shall ever hear. You may never be spared to come to a place of worship again. Perhaps, while you sit here, the last sands are dropping from the hour glass; and then, no more warning can be given, because redemption and escape shall be impossible to you.

Soul, I lift up before thee, Christ the crucified one—"Whosoever believeth on him shall never perish, but hath eternal life." As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so this morning the Son of Man is lifted up. Sinner, see his wounds. Look to his thorn-crowned head. See the nails of his hands and of his

feet. Do you perceive him? Hark! while he cries, "Why hast thou forsaken me?" Listen again, while he says, "It is finished! It is finished!" Salvation finished! And now, salvation is freely preached to thee. Believe on Christ and thou shalt be saved. Trust him, and all the horrors of the future shall have no power over you; but the splendors of this prophecy shall be fulfilled, be they what they may. Oh that this morning some of you may trust my Master for the first time in your lives; and this done, you need not curiously enquire what the future shall be, but you may sit down calmly and say, "Come when it will; my soul is on the rock of ages; it fears no ill; it fears no tempest; it defies all pain. Come quickly! come quickly! even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus." AMEN.

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